the weekly Standard

OCTOBER 11, 2004 • $3.95

THE RISE OF THE VALUES VOTER
JEFFREY BELL & FRANK CANNON

The Battle for Iraq

by Reuel Marc Gerecht

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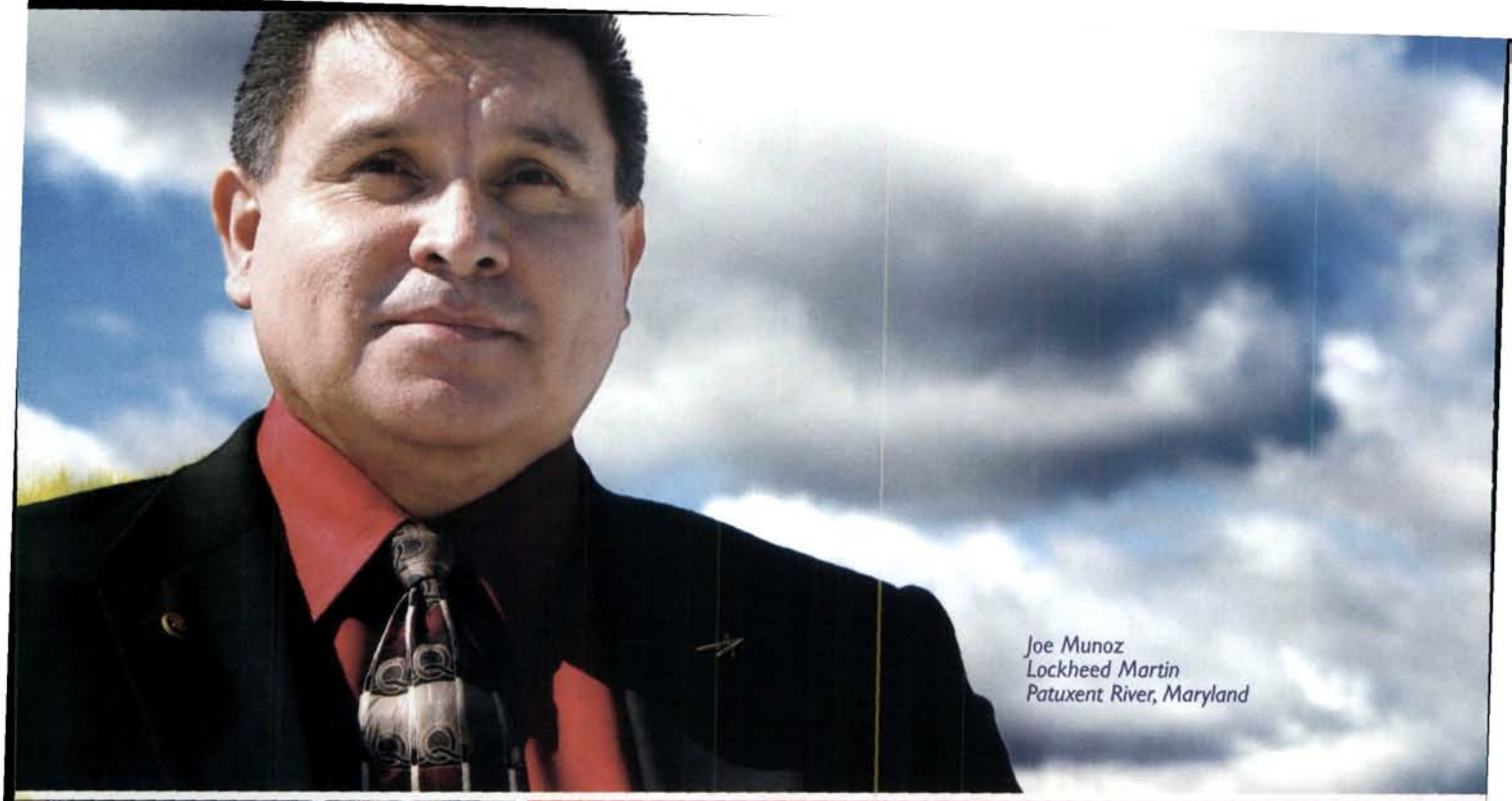

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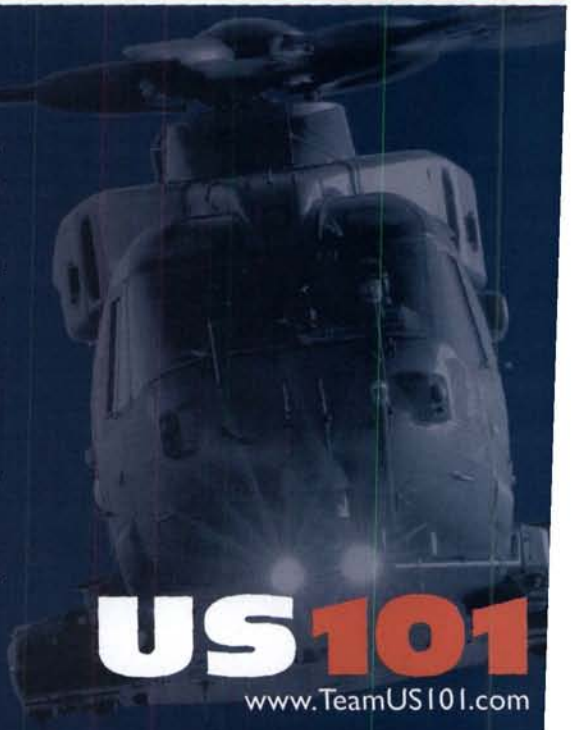

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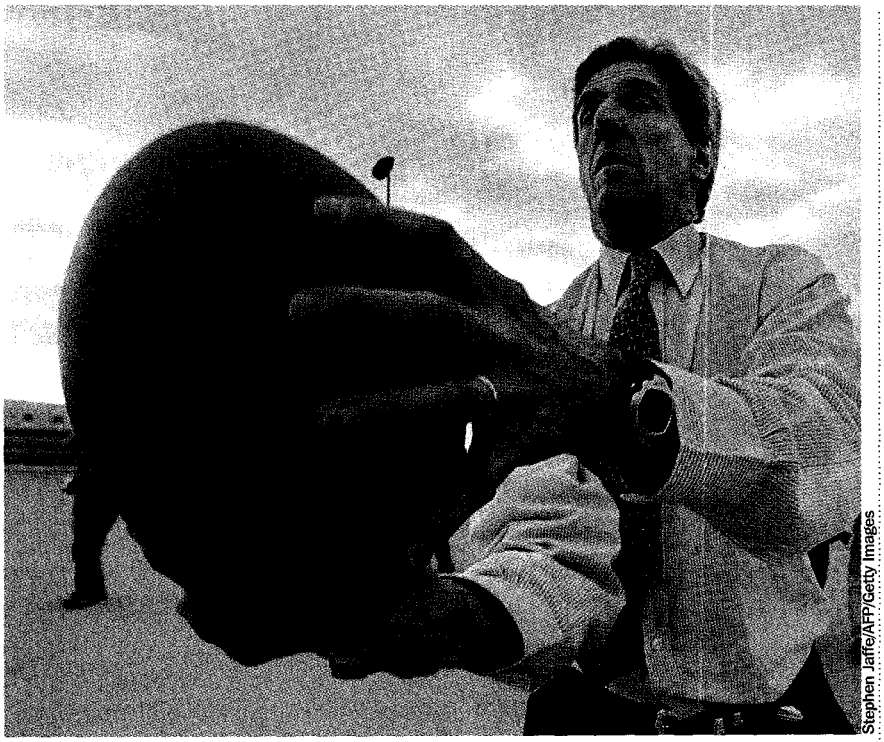
Wisconsin Sports Report



Stephen Jaffe/AFP/Getty Images

During an already semi-legendary August 25 campaign appearance in Green Bay (see "The Battle for Wisconsin" by Stephen F. Hayes, Sept. 6), John Kerry—in full "I'm a regular-guy sports fan, just like you" mode—mentioned something about the hometown Packers football team and its stadium, Lambeau Field. Only Kerry called the place "Lambert Field." And he's been running 8 to 10 points behind President Bush in every Wisconsin preference poll since. Which is no small thing. Gore took the state four years ago. There are 10 electoral votes at issue, and Kerry probably can't afford to lose them.

Working to ensure that he *does* lose them, however, "Football Fans for Truth," tongue planted firmly in cheek, has now registered with the IRS as an independent "527 group," promising to alert America to the "terrible dangers posed by Kerry to the sports world." Football Fans for Truth director Jeff Larroca: "I shudder to think of this man throwing out first pitches for four years." Group chairman Dino Panagopoulos: "I mean, this is a person who probably prefers Astro-Turf to real grass." Besides which, the Football Fans for Truth website points out: "John Kerry throws a football like a girl."

Ouch.

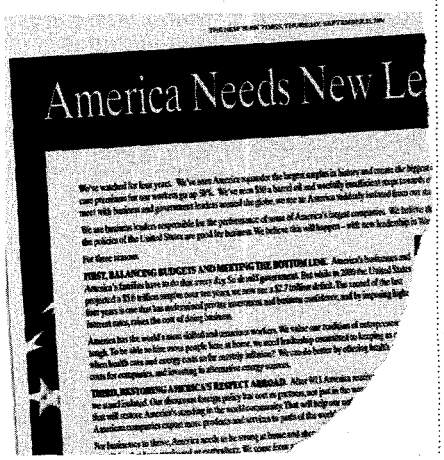
The group's maiden publicity effort was due to be unveiled October 1, with the installation of a Green Bay billboard reading "Welcome to . . . 'Lambert Field'?—John Kerry, [8/25/2004]."

Memo to Senator Kerry: Perhaps you could make up for this boner by saying something nice about retired Packers hero-quarterback Bart Starr-fish? ♦

Who's on Second?

More than 200 of America's best-known CEOs, investment bankers, and business school deans think "America Needs New Leadership"—of the John Kerry variety—according to a full-page *New York Times* ad those muckety-mucks signed on behalf of the Democratic National Committee on September 23. And *why* exactly do they believe that America Needs New Leadership? "For three reasons," actually.

"*First*, balancing budgets and meeting the bottom line," a sentence fragment the DNC broadside follows up



America Needs New Le

with two short paragraphs of explanation before coming to . . .

"*Third*, restoring America's respect abroad," another sentence fragment, followed by another pair of elaborative paragraphs, followed by . . .

Nothing except the signatories' names, oddly enough. The second reason why John Kerry should be president will have to remain a mystery for now.

Maybe America Needs New Leadership because the people currently directing our principal economic institutions have trouble counting to three? ♦

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This Just In

The Imam Muhammad ibn Saud University in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia—recently mentioned in these pages for its part in the dissemination of Wahhabi extremist dogma (see Stephen Schwartz's "Rewriting the Koran," Sept. 27)—is again in the news.

Last Thursday two important European dailies, Milan's *Corriere della Sera* and *El Mundo* in Madrid, published an unusual joint story about Rabei Osman Ahmed el Sayed, aka "Mohammad the Egyptian," who is awaiting extradition from Italy to Spain as the self-described mastermind of the Madrid commuter train bombings that killed 191 people back in March. This latest report suggests that Western counterterrorism officials have already identified Osman's up-the-chain immediate superior. Italian security police apparently have surveillance tapes of a May 26 conversation in which Osman admits that he planned the Madrid bombings while "working for" a certain Salman al-Awda.

Notwithstanding this piece of intelligence—and despite his past association with at least one of the 9/11 conspirators, for that matter—al-Awda, one of Saudi Arabia's most prominent Wahhabi clerics, is today alive and well and working as a professor at the Imam Muhammad ibn Saud University in Riyadh. ♦

Unsubstantiated Unsubstantiation

According to the correction the *New York Times* ran six days later, its Thursday, September 23, story "about political advertising in the presidential campaign, including a commercial that accused John Kerry of having 'secretly met with the enemy' in Paris in the 1970s, misidentified the parties with whom Mr. Kerry said he had met at the Vietnam peace talks." And "the error was repeated in articles on Friday and Saturday." In fact, "the parties were the two Communist delegations—North Vietnam and the Vietcong's Provisional Revolutionary Government—with whom he discussed the status of war prisoners. He did not say he had met with 'both sides.'"

According to THE SCRAPBOOK, however, the *Times* correction itself misidentifies the nature of its error here—by omitting all mention of its context.

What reporter Katharine Q. Seelye wrote in the original story was this: "Swift Boat Veterans for Truth, whose past accusations have frequently been unsubstantiated, says in a new commercial that Mr. Kerry went to Paris in the 1970s and 'secretly met with the enemy.'" Not so, Seelye's account then attempted to demonstrate; Kerry later testified that he'd met with "both sides."

The essential point being that Seelye and the *Times* had all but explicitly called the Swift boaters redbaiting liars—on the basis of a Swift boat charge that was actually *true*. If THE SCRAPBOOK ever made a mistake like this, it would print the requisite correction—and *apologize*, too. THE SCRAPBOOK regrets the *Times*'s failure to do so. ♦

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Casual

Reality Bites

My mother recently told me that my apartment looks like a nineteenth-century brothel. The dark red of the walls, she said, makes her think of Belle Watling's house of ill repute.

Almost everyone who sees the place has a similar opinion. My father calls it a dungeon. My friends say it's "gothic" and "depressing." It's on the ground floor, and once when I pulled back the patio curtain and opened the door to let some light in, I heard a passerby mutter, "What happened in there?"

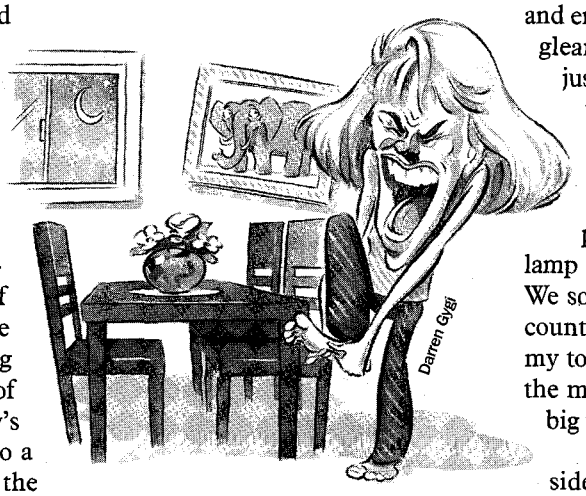
There's an answer to that question, and it isn't that I have a warped sense of decorating chic. What happened was reality TV. Specifically, the Learning Channel's *Trading Spaces* is the source of the assorted eyesores that have taken over my apartment, including framed pictures of elephants (part of the Republican theme the show's designers hit upon in deference to a roommate's job on the Hill) and the blinding red and orange patio curtain, which often won't slide and is falling down because the curtain rod is so cheap.

For those who don't watch the Learning Channel, the premise of the show is this: Two pairs of people switch homes for two days and, with help from some designers and a carpenter, completely redecorate a room for each other on a budget of $1,000.

Old furniture is stripped, refinished, reupholstered, or replaced. Walls are painted. Pillows, drapes, lamps, knick-knacks, and art are added or upgraded. The show climaxes when the participants surprise each other with the transformed rooms.

One of my roommates was invited to participate last fall. Since we had just moved in and had little time or incentive to furnish or decorate a place where we only intended to stay for a year, we all agreed to let the show come in and presumably spiff us up. I suppose we fell for the lure of effortless glamour.

I had seen the show a few times, and I knew about the occasional *Trading Spaces* horror story. In one episode, the designer (the same who would go on to redecorate our apartment) decided to glue straw all over one



couple's living room walls. The husband swore when he saw it. (This episode has been nominated as *Trading Spaces*'s "jump the shark" moment.) In another, the owner of an heirloom piano was distressed to find it painted black.

To avoid disaster, we requested that no straw, glue, or pastel colors be used. Heirloom furniture wasn't a worry since we don't own any. Spared any redecorating duties, I decamped to my parents' for the weekend.

When we came back home to our transformed living room, brownish-red candles in wrought iron candelabras burned on a new dining room table, set with red-tinted wine glasses. A soft, cream-colored couch, two plush brown armchairs, and an entertainment center had been purchased at discount and revamped. There were pictures on the walls. Five floor-to-ceiling cream and gray pillars had been erected in our dining room. Our blinds had been removed and replaced with that curtain. And the walls were oxblood.

On television, it may have looked cozy or even sophisticated. In reality, the deliberate blocking out of natural light, its replacement with candlelight, and all that red paint produced the aforementioned bordello/dungeon effect.

Perhaps not detectable in the broadcast but obvious in real life is that the makeover was slapped together with little time or money. Paint is splattered on the ceiling, light switches, and baseboards. The dining room table and entertainment center, though they gleamed on television, are actually just painted brown. We were left a total of three matching dining room chairs.

The problems aren't just aesthetic. One of those tinny pillars fell down and broke a lamp our first night in our new place. We soon threw them all away. I can't count how many times I've smashed my toes into the dining room table in the middle of the night since it's too big for our dining area.

To help me look on the bright side, my father pointed out that at least if anything gets spilled on the brown armchairs, it won't show. Also, when we leave, *Trading Spaces* will graciously have the walls painted white for the next tenants.

They never replaced our cleaning supplies, however, which they used up or otherwise disposed of in the course of their creative labors. And I'm out a dining room table and two chairs, removed from the scene by the decorators and carted off to storage, where I was given the option of arranging for their retrieval at short notice.

But there I go again being negative. I'm trying to focus on the couch I've gained. Besides, the whole business is nearly behind us. The lease on my new apartment starts this week.

Rachel DiCarlo

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True Lies

The Scrapbook item on "The 'Fake But Accurate' Media" (Sept. 27) was more to the point of the Rathergate scandal than anything else I've seen.

CBS is taking what I call the "green cheese" view of Rathergate. It's as if CBS has said: "We've heard for years that the moon is made of green cheese, but this is just talk. So we can't go on the air with it." Then a scientist steps forward with proof the moon is made of green cheese. CBS airs the story, but the research turns out to be bogus. CBS can claim, "The research is not authentic, but it doesn't change what we are hearing. The moon is made of green cheese and these questions must be raised."

In short, they have used the fake documents to gain entry and open dialogue on a story that would not exist without the documents.

Mark Puls
Detroit, MI

Blog-Day Afternoon

I enjoyed Jonathan V. Last's piece on how the Internet brought down CBS News ("What Blogs Have Wrought," Sept. 27). Given how quickly the National Guard memos were shown to be forgeries, CBS clearly neglected basic reporting.

For example, the network didn't confirm when Brig. Gen. Staudt retired. Nor did it compare the documents with others in Lt. Col. Killian's official records.

The whole story is reminiscent of the fake Abu Ghraib photos. These photos, published by the *Boston Globe*, appeared to show American soldiers raping Iraqi women in the prison. But a few days later, the photos were revealed to be fraudulent. (They were actually downloads from a Hungarian porn site.) As in the CBS documents case, the Internet played a role in exposing the pictures as bogus.

The *Globe* ran a rather mealy-mouthed correction, in which it apologized for publishing the "inappropriate" photos. This prompted radio talk-show host Rush Limbaugh to note that the photos weren't just "inappropriate," they were forgeries.

In each respective case, the *Globe* and CBS went forth with material that should have been regarded with much more skepticism. The only plausible explanation is that CBS trusted the dubious memos for the same reason the *Globe* trusted the dubious photos. Namely, they wanted them to be true.

Richard DiNardo
Stafford, VA

Johnny's Got a Gun

In Katherine Mangu-Ward's article "Trigger Happy" (Sept. 27), I was greatly amused by the accompanying photograph of John Kerry trap shooting in Edinburg, Ohio. If Kerry were a true clay-pigeon duster, the self-proclaimed "hunter" and "gun owner" would have donned ear guards and eye protection

before firing that shotgun. The renowned gun grabber was apparently preoccupied with the photo-op of his "French" profile and perfectly groomed coiffure. That Kodak moment with Kerry was likely the best shot taken that day at the trap range.

Stephen D. Austin
Salem, OR

Harvard's Accused

Joseph Bottum repeats the false accusation against me of excessive dependence on an earlier book about Israel (The Standard Reader, Sept. 20). *The Case For Israel* being a brief, rather than a volume of original demographic research, of course depended on the research of others, especially the 7 pages (out of a total of 264) that dealt with century-old obscure demographic material.

That's what briefs do. Every single word, phrase, sentence, and idea of other writers was quoted and footnoted. Even my biased accusers acknowledge this. Their preposterous claim is that I should have cited the quotes to the secondary source in which I found a handful of them, rather than to the primary source against which I checked them. I followed *The Chicago Manual of Style* and did exactly what I was supposed to do. That is why these false and politically motivated charges have been universally dismissed by objective scholars.

As to Charles Ogletree, I have had the pleasure of teaching and practicing with him over the decades and can attest to his scrupulous integrity, honesty, and fairness. His book is an absorbing memoir of *Brown*'s impact on Ogletree's life, and on the lives of all Americans.

When Charles was recommended for tenure, I enthusiastically supported him because in addition to being a serious scholar and excellent teacher, he brings unparalleled talents to our faculty as a practitioner. When he was invited to Harvard, it was because he had a deserved reputation as the best young public defender in America. Not the best black public defender, but the best period. Harvard Law School is a professional school that requires professional diversity. Granting tenure to a great trial lawyer who has become an extraordinary clinical professor adds to that diversity. I have long opposed racial quotas in hiring. With Ogletree, it's about talent, not race.

Alan M. Dershowitz
Cambridge, MA

•••

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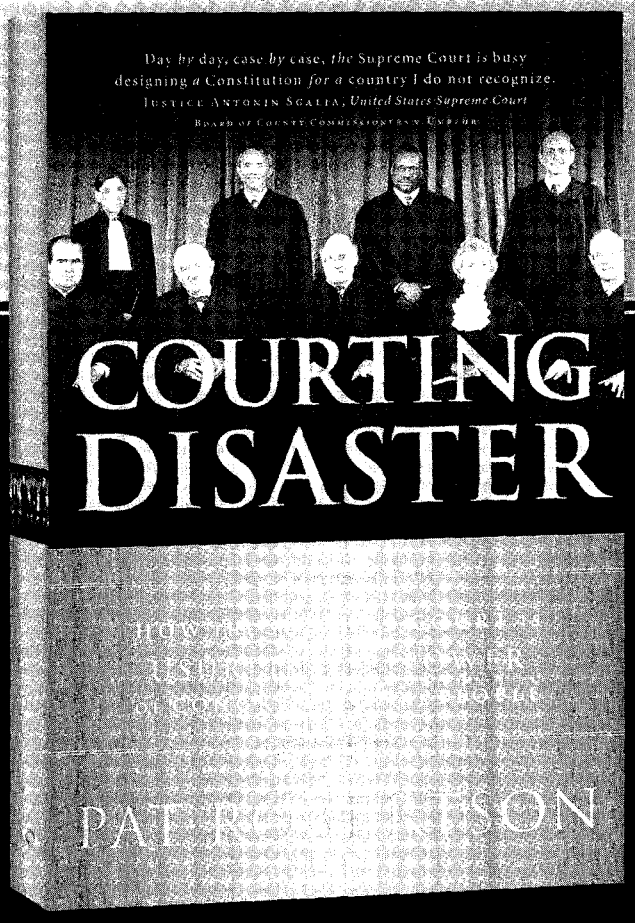

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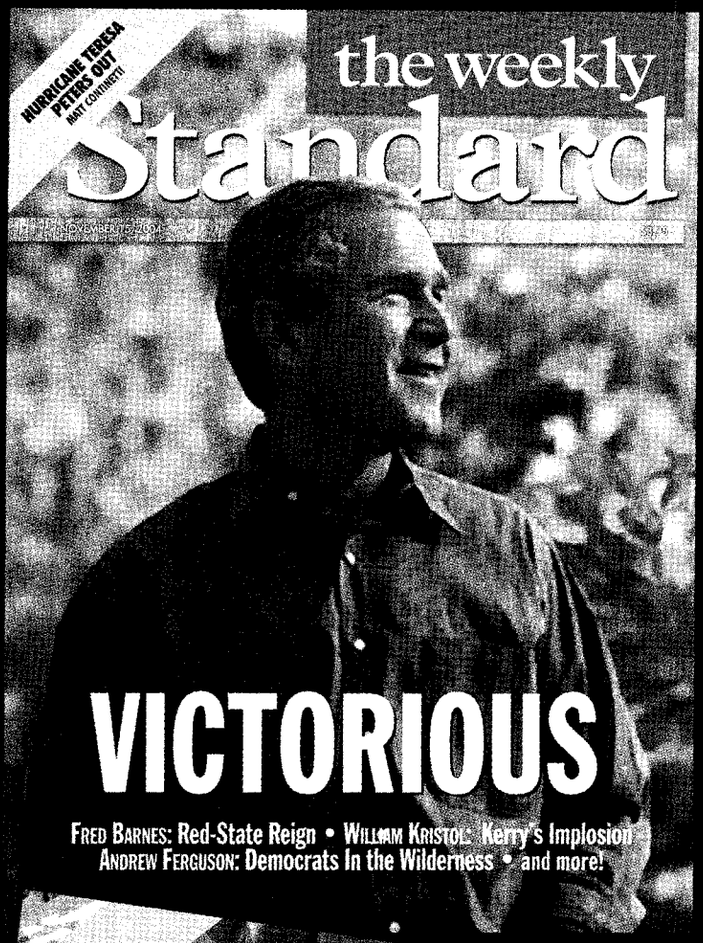

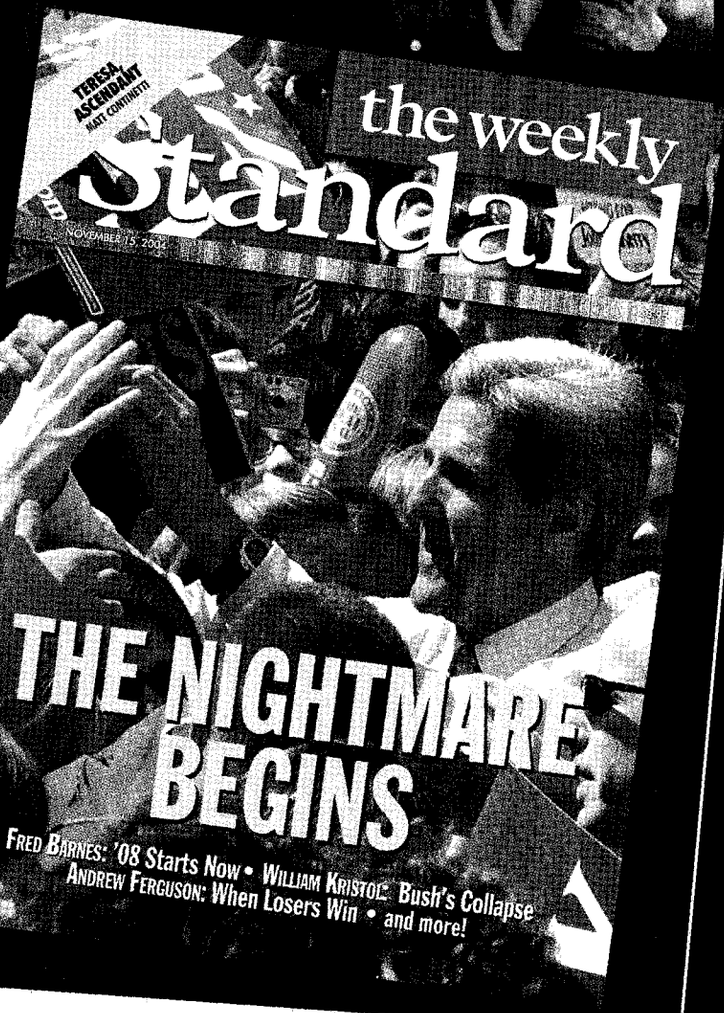

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the weekly Standard

Another Vietnam?

John Kerry is famously hard to pin down; you can reach out to grasp his opinion only to find that it has flitted away like a bashful butterfly, or a goldfish you are trying to catch with your bare hands. But nowadays his pronouncements and campaign ads are easy to read. They suggest that Iraq is like Vietnam; that our top priority is accordingly not to win but to get out. John Kerry evidently believes, a propos Vietnam, that we should have run away sooner. Many Americans disagree. Many Americans believe that we should have stood by our friends until a free and stable South Vietnam had taken root.

What *is* the "lesson of Vietnam"? It's a hard question, in a way; virtually all Americans agree that Vietnam was a tragedy and a national humiliation—and, at least during the years when William Westmoreland was in command, a badly fought war. Kerry seems to believe that these propositions lead to only one possible conclusion. By shouting "Vietnam!" he thinks he can induce desperation and make Americans turn in horror to the Democrats begging for relief, begging to be pulled out of this awful quagmire. His mistake is something like Abu Musab al Zarqawi's. I don't say *Kerry* is like Zarqawi, of course not. But Zarqawi believes that by committing barbarities on videotape, he has made Americans tremble with fear; in fact we are trembling with rage. (And someday this mistake will be vividly brought home to him.) Kerry believes that by saying "we are facing another Vietnam," he can frighten people; and some Americans will indeed be frightened. Far more will say: If this be Vietnam, make the most of it. Let's do it right this time.

President Bush should announce: You want to talk Vietnam? Fine, let's talk. Kerry believes that Iraq is turning into a Vietnam-like "quagmire"; the assertion is false, and it's important that voters know why it is false. But there is a more important, deeper-lying disagreement under the surface. Bush obviously stands with the large contingent of Americans who are determined that, if we ever *did* face another Vietnam, *never again* would we pull out in a headlong rush and leave our allies sinking in the mud, clutching at our helicopter skids as we fly away, with the wreck of the new and better nation we had tried to build collapsing around their heads. Never again will we treat America's trustworthiness and honor, and the hopes of our friends, and the blood-sacrifices of our soldiers, like bad debts to be written off with a shudder.

We fought in South Vietnam to protect that country from a torrent of Communist evil threatening to roll down from the North. I suppose not many Americans remember the details. But surely a fair number *do* remember how Congress concluded that Vietnam was a *quagmire*, a *mistake*, the *wrong war at the wrong time*. Whereupon it refused to vote any more money for the war, not one more cent; whereupon we pulled out in a gathering panic, and South Vietnam fell to the invading tanks of the North. Then the picture goes blank. Totalitarian regimes don't like network cameramen advertising the little clean-up that invariably accompanies the establishment of a brand new absolute dictatorship. But many Americans surely recall that, after we ran away, something awful happened. The evil rolled down in a flood. Huge numbers put to sea in rickety rowboats. Cambodia fell to the Khmer Rouge and its bosses, a group of French-trained Communist intellectuals who created a virtually indescribable hell-on-earth. Millions died.

The truth about Communist South Vietnam leaked out gradually. Many thousands were executed; many more were thrown into "reeducation" camps—estimates range from a few hundred thousand to over a million inmates. "What Vietnam has given us," wrote Tom Wicker of the *New York Times* after the Communist victory, is "a vast tide of human misery in Southeast Asia." Two sentences convey more about the regime's character than a page of statistics. In *Why We Were in Vietnam*, Norman Podhoretz quotes Doan Van Toai, a political prisoner jailed by the Communists after we left and they triumphed. "I was thrown into a three-foot-by-six-foot cell with my left hand chained to my right foot and my right hand chained to my left foot. My food was rice mixed with sand." There in two sentences is the reason we were right to fight and wrong to run. Americans have good cause to reject John Kerry's suggestion that, if Iraq is like Vietnam, *getting out* is our number one priority. If it is truly like Vietnam, all the more reason to fight relentlessly and to think of victory, *only* victory, until the enemy has been beaten to bits. Americans want to *erase* the worst national humiliation we have ever suffered, not recreate it.

But Iraq is *not* like Vietnam. We control most of the country. A strong and able Iraqi government fights alongside us. The enemy has no phony romantic aura bearing it up, wafting it along; Jane Fonda has failed to materialize in Falluja. (At least, as this magazine goes to press.) But there is something to the Vietnam analogy. Thanks to Vietnam we now understand how a credulous press corps can turn a massive enemy defeat into a first-class victory. At the end of

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January 1968, the North Vietnamese and the (indigenous-to-the-South) Vietcong launched attacks throughout the South, known as the Tet offensive. They failed disastrously. The attackers suffered more than 40,000 casualties; the Vietcong were virtually wiped out. "Intended to destroy South Vietnamese officialdom and spark a popular uprising," writes Derek Leebaert, "Tet ironically had more of an effect in turning South Vietnam's people against the North." But the press reported Tet as a smashing Communist victory.

The Tet offensive could happen all over again in Iraq any day now. Merely defeating the enemy won't be enough. A widespread attack might be thrown back, might fail to provoke the Sunni or Shiite uprising it was supposed to—and might nonetheless be reported (just by accident, you understand) as a devastating American defeat. It's not enough for America to win battles; the world must *know* that we have won. This time we will be on our guard—I hope. It is reassuring to reflect that, since Vietnam, the mainstream, prestige press has gradually managed to destroy its believability inch by inch. A spectacular reversal of fortunes: Nowadays when the press fires belligerent, obnoxious questions at dignified military spokesmen, people root for *the military spokesmen*! The credit for this transformation must be shared equally between the military and the reporters.

Obviously no one *wants* a quagmire. No one wants to sacrifice American lives to prove a point. Our duty in Iraq is to win fast, make sure the country is safe, and get out. We have a huge preponderance of power, and therefore we win by fighting; the enemy wins by waiting. We need to engage the enemy and win.

Every combat death we sustain is a tragedy. All Americans mourn every one. Nonetheless: A long fight wins a different sort of victory than a short fight, a victory that costs more and is ultimately worth more. "What you have achieved," Wittgenstein wrote, "cannot mean more to others than it does to you. Whatever it has cost you, that's what they will pay." Iraq has cost us plenty, but the payment hasn't been made in vain. We have already gone far towards silencing the post-Vietnam slander that says America is physically tough but mentally and spiritually weak. We have gone far towards recouping a certain kind of credibility we lost in Vietnam—and American credibility is a precious substance; it can save lives by the million. If we had the credibility (or magic power) to tell the regime of North Korea, Iran, or the Sudan: Clean up your act or be crushed by American power, get to it, hop!—millions would rejoice. And Americans know it.

And so if Kerry *should* succeed in convincing this nation that Iraq today resembles Vietnam circa 1968, he will discover that America today bears scant resemblance to *itself* circa 1968. Kerry may have learned nothing from Vietnam, but America has learned plenty.

—David Gelernter, for the Editors

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The Rise of the Values Voter

The political megatrend nobody wants to talk about. BY JEFFREY BELL & FRANK CANNON

IF YOU HAD TO PICK a single reason why the Democratic party is weaker at all levels than at any time in the last 50 years, it is the transformation of moral-values issues into an overwhelming Republican asset.

In recent presidential cycles, post-election polling found that social issues like abortion, while invariably a mild plus for Republicans, were cited by a relatively small segment of the electorate as a prime motive for voting one way or the other. Moreover, social conservatism was seen as good in the South and heartland and bad on the coasts, making it dubious as a national theme or as a subject of campaign commercials. Conventional wisdom among GOP political consultants has been to mobilize socially conservative voters by a stealth strategy of quietly "passing the word" to "our people."

New polling by *Time* and MSNBC/Knight-Ridder suggests that all this has changed. The proportion of voters who say they are keying their vote on "moral values issues like gay marriage and abortion" has gone up sharply—to a level of 15 to 18 percent, according to five national polls commissioned by *Time* and conducted by Schulman, Ronca, and Bucuvalas since July. More important, the profile of such voters is no longer definable in the vocabulary of polarization and divisiveness. The most recent *Time* poll (taken September 21-23) has George W. Bush winning socially driven voters by a lopsided 70 to 18 percent. If not for these voters, according to the poll, Bush would be trailing John Kerry by 5 points instead of leading by 4.

These numbers would be striking enough if the only available data concerned the national popular vote. But as MSNBC's mid-September polls in 10 pivotal states in the Electoral College make clear, the GOP advantage on social issues is even more salient in the struggle for the handful of states both sides agree will determine the presidential outcome.

MSNBC's survey firm, Mason Dixon Polling & Research, offered "Moral Issues and Family Values" as one of the options on the question, "Which one of the following issues will be most important in determining your vote for President this year?" Anywhere from 12 percent (Pennsylvania) to 16 percent (Missouri) made this selection. Bush's lead over Kerry among these voters ranged from not quite 8-1 in Oregon to more than 10-1 in Ohio and more than 12-1 in Missouri. Unlike many past polls on social issues, there was no significant regional pattern. Eastern swing states like New Hampshire and Pennsylvania and western states like Arizona and Oregon were just as likely to favor Bush overwhelmingly on moral and family issues as were heartland states. (No southern states were among the 10 polled by MSNBC.)

In every state where Bush led (8 of the 10), his "moral issues and family values" margin was more than his overall lead. In other words, in the 8 Bush-leaning swing states, Bush trailed Kerry on all other issues combined. In fact, in only one other issue offered by MSNBC, "Terrorism and Homeland Security," did Bush have a clear lead over Kerry. In both the state polls by MSNBC and the series of national polls by *Time*, Kerry had strong leads in the economic issue cluster and health care.

Interestingly, voters who select social issues as their prime mover are disproportionately female, both nationally and in the swing states. This seems to account for Bush's increased strength (for a Republican) among female voters. Terrorism-centered voters, the other issue group favoring Bush, tilt toward the male side. So much for "security moms" as an explanation for Kerry's unexpected weakness among women.

Why has the social-issue cluster become so much more favorable to Republicans all over the country? Part of the reason is a gradual voter trend on abortion. After trailing roughly 3-2 in the early 1990s, pro-lifers pulled even with pro-choicers in the late 1990s and may enjoy a small but growing advantage among all voters today. This trend has coincided with the prominence of the often graphic debate over partial-birth abortion. What is undeniable is that Democratic candidates at all levels of politics have become markedly less inclined to talk about abortion rights.

The biggest social-issue event in the past year or two, of course, has been the acceleration of the drive for same-sex marriage and its court-imposed advent in Massachusetts. Because there has been little polling on the relation of same-sex marriage to presidential voting (only the *Time* national polls seem to have thought to test it), a large share of any speculation is bound to be circumstantial. But it did seem that the July referendum on same-sex marriage in Missouri marked a turning point in the Bush-Kerry matchup there—the Kerry campaign soon afterward pulled its advertising—and that a widely reported controversy over putting a prohibition on gay marriage on Ohio's November ballot coincided with an underperformance by Kerry in a state that has experienced a weak economy during the Bush years.

The controversy over the homosexuality of outgoing New Jersey governor James McGreevey has come in a state Al Gore carried by 16 percentage

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points in 2000, but where Bush has unexpectedly pulled nearly even in recent surveys. And Scott Rasmussen, the only pollster doing public daily tracking of the national vote for the House, has noted that Republican surges often seem to coincide with elevation of the gay-marriage debate in Washington.

The actions and reactions of the two national tickets suggest a considerable degree of consciousness of the changed dynamic of social issues, particularly same-sex marriage. Kerry attacked the idea of amending the Constitution in his Boston acceptance speech, but has hardly returned to the subject since, except to agree with voters who want to write a ban into their state constitutions. In his war-centered New York acceptance speech, Bush spent a couple of pointed sentences putting space between himself and Kerry on same-sex marriage and the judges willing to legislate it. Bush defends traditional marriage and judicial conservatism in most of his stump speeches, and these are reportedly among his surest applause lines.

At the level of Senate and House races, Republicans have made far less of a visible effort to position themselves to the right of Democrats on social issues than has the Bush campaign. Many GOP incumbents and candidates are undoubtedly still operating on the "stealth" model, assuming that social issues are mainly for "motivating the base."

But compared with the past, a more public debate entails minimal risk to Republicans. The MSNBC polling suggests there is no significant voting stream or region this year—even those previously seen as socially liberal—where social issues are anything other than a potentially grave threat to the *Democratic* base. In the most recent *Time* poll, which reflects huge progress for Bush since July in the foreign-policy debate, social issues still provide a roughly equal Bush advantage over Kerry, and there are hints that Ralph Nader, an outright backer of same-sex marriage, is gaining at Kerry's expense among social liberals.

Moreover, the latest *Time* poll finds as many undecided voters among social-issue voters as among the much larger number of voters keyed to foreign policy. New anti-gay-marriage ads put up by an independent-expenditure group headed by Gary Bauer could help Bush in Michigan and Pennsylvania, two vote-rich states where, according to the MSNBC polling, social issues are already a strong net plus for Bush.

Because of 9/11, 2004 was always destined to be a wartime election. The president was right in believing that at a time of unnerving headlines in Iraq, he had to make the case for his war strategy head on. But the big surprise in this year's issue mix is the growing number of voters who believe there is a values war here at home. The good news for Bush and Republicans is that voters who reach that conclusion are anything but polarized on how that war should come out. ♦

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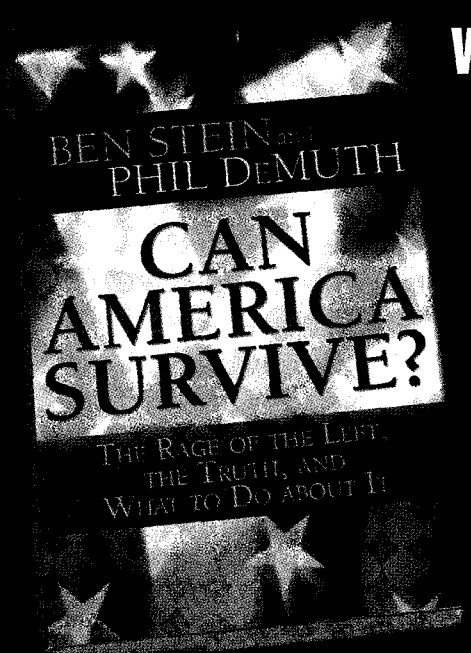

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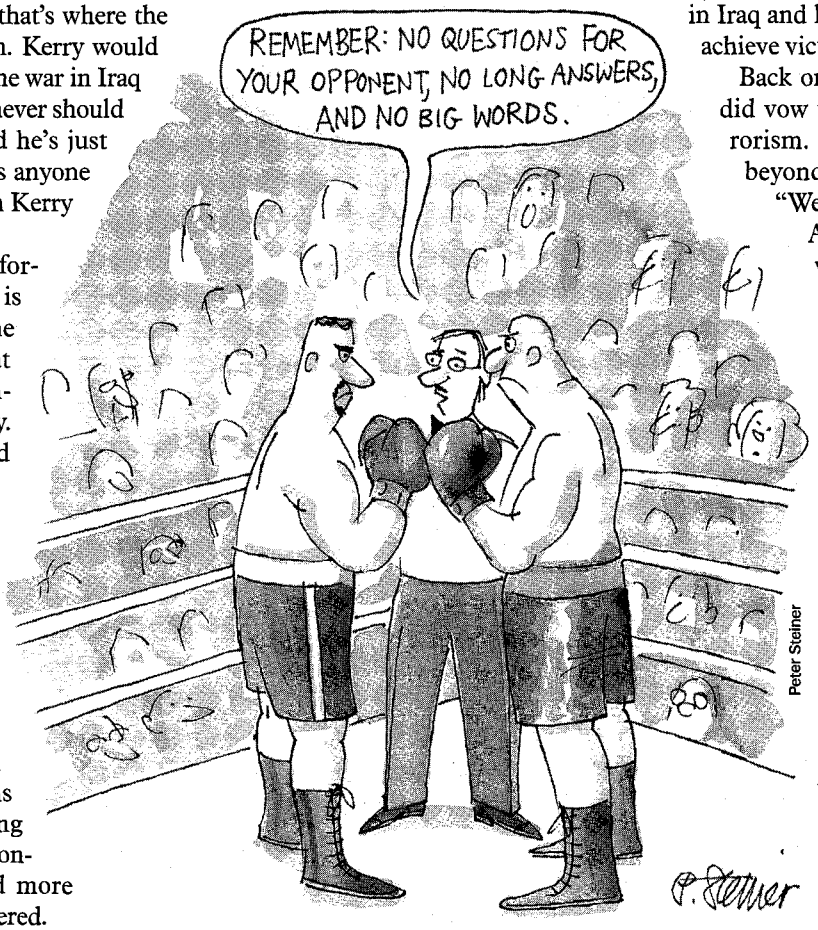
Debate Hangover

Some things Kerry said may come back to haunt him. BY FRED BARNES

HERE'S WHY President Bush survives the gauntlet of three nationally televised debates: the Kerry contradiction. John Kerry is glib and knowledgeable and smart enough in his attacks on Bush to stop short of being overbearing and abrasive. But the dominant issue in the campaign is Iraq, and that's where the contradiction comes in. Kerry would have you believe that the war in Iraq is a horrible fiasco we never should have gotten into—and he's just the guy to win it. Does anyone really believe that, even Kerry himself? I doubt it.

The Kerry performance in the debate is likely to have the same effect as his speech at the Democratic convention in late July. The speech was lauded at the time as strong and persuasive—I thought so myself—but it didn't wear well. Within days, Kerry's lavishly touted record in Vietnam was under harsh scrutiny. And his failure to make an adequate case for his election was becoming clear. In the end, the convention speech raised more questions than it answered.

Instead of clearing up Kerry's contradictory position on Iraq, the debate last week highlighted it. Kerry, seemingly oblivious to how the contradiction sounds, stated it again and again, boldly and proudly. At one point, he said Bush made a "colossal error of judgment" in invading Iraq and toppling Saddam Hussein. "And Iraq is not even the center of the focus of the war on terror." As president, Kerry said he would change course and concentrate not on Iraq but on capturing Osama bin Laden and thwarting al Qaeda. Yet he went on to insist that he "can do a better job in Iraq. . . . I'm going to lead those troops to victory."



Peter Steiner

Victory? That's a word Kerry doesn't often use in relation to Iraq. He didn't use it in his September 20 speech that made the Iraq issue the top priority of his campaign. That speech, ballyhooed by the Kerry campaign as seminal, emphasized withdrawing American troops from Iraq, beginning in the first six months of his presidency and ending with all the troops coming home within four years. But 10 days later in the debate, there was no talk of withdrawal as Kerry took the victory tack on Iraq. "I believe that we have to win this," he said. "The president and I have always agreed on that."

Not quite. Kerry disagreed with Bush on the paramount need for military victory in Iraq in the September 20 speech and in practically everything he's said this year on Iraq. But now, Kerry said, he has a plan for winning in Iraq and he's the leader who can achieve victory.

Back on September 20, Kerry did vow to win the war on terrorism. "The terrorists are beyond reason," he declared. "We must destroy them. As president I will do whatever it takes, as long as it takes, to defeat our enemies. . . . To win, America must be strong and America must be smart." Fine, but this doesn't apply to Iraq because Kerry has never considered the war there as part of the war on terrorism.

Kerry got caught in a related Iraq contradiction in the debate, two of them actually. "The president made a mistake in invading Iraq," he said. Then moments later, when asked by moderator Jim Lehrer if Americans are dying in Iraq for a mistake, Kerry said no. That was a palpable contradiction. So what are Americans dying for? Kerry didn't have a compelling answer.

The other contradiction involved something Kerry called the "global test" that must be passed before taking preemptive military action against an

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enemy. Kerry insisted he would never allow another country to have veto power over any national security decision affecting America. But he said preemption was proper only when you pass "the global test where your countrymen, your people understand fully why you're doing what you're doing and you can prove it to the world that you did it for legitimate reasons." Kerry made no attempt to explain this contradiction.

Bush, a master of resolve and repetition but nobody's idea of a smooth talker, hammered Kerry on his contradictions. After Kerry said he "can get your kids home [from Iraq] and get the job done and win the peace," Bush delivered this retort: "I don't see how you can lead this country to succeed in Iraq if you say wrong war, wrong time, wrong place." Bush repeated the point several times, just as he questioned how Kerry could attract more allies to help in Iraq while criticizing the current ones as the "coerced and the bribed."

But Bush's responses during the debate aren't Kerry's biggest problem. Remember how the debate phenomenon works: What you say gets picked at and examined for days afterwards. If you commit a gaffe, that soundbite will be broadcast with merciless frequency on television. Neither Bush nor Kerry made such a flub last week. But a candidate who contradicts himself or leaves glaringly unanswered questions behind invites sharp and unpleasant media scrutiny. That's what Kerry left himself vulnerable to.

You don't have to take my word for it. In its lead editorial the morning after the debate, the *Washington Post* jumped on Kerry's lack of an answer to Bush's charge that a critic of the Iraq war who sends "mixed messages" couldn't lead American troops to victory and sign up new allies. Kerry's "argument that 'the real war on terrorism [is] in Afghanistan against Osama bin Laden' seemed to us unconvincing alongside Mr. Bush's repeated insistence that success in Iraq and on other fronts is equally vital to U.S. security." If the *Post* is unconvinced, others are bound to be as well. ♦

Takes One to Know One

John Edwards may want to be careful with charges of inconsistency on Iraq. BY STEPHEN F. HAYES

JOHN EDWARDS believes that words matter. Especially for those who would lead the nation during a time of war. He's right.

So it was entirely appropriate that Edwards last week resurrected cautionary remarks Vice President Dick Cheney made about the dangers of governing a post-Saddam Iraq. In a Seattle speech, Cheney had worried aloud about a long-term troop presence in Iraq. He worried about American casualties. He even worried about getting "bogged down in the problems of trying to take over and govern Iraq."

When did these seemingly prescient words escape Cheney's lips? More than 12 years ago, in August 1992.

Cheney, through a spokesman, acknowledged that his position has changed since he was secretary of defense discussing the aftermath of the first Gulf War. The vice president's explanation for the change is not complicated: September 11, 2001.

"Senator Edwards is acting as if September 11 never happened. Americans and the entire world know that everything changed after September 11," says Anne Womack, a spokesman for the Bush-Cheney campaign. "Senator Edwards seems not to have recognized that."

But there was a time when Edwards did seem to recognize that September 11 changed everything. It came on September 12, 2002. And if Cheney's words from 1992 are relevant, then so are the ones Edwards spoke on the Senate floor less than two years ago. Edwards, to his credit, warned of the "consequences of success" in Iraq and counseled the Bush administration to prepare for a postwar occupation. But as was typical then of Edwards's public arguments in favor of removing Saddam Hussein, his rhetoric was perhaps even more hawkish than the words coming from the Bush administration.

"The time has come for decisive action," he said, calling for the ouster of Saddam Hussein a month before Congress voted to authorize the war and before the CIA produced its October 2002 National Intelligence Estimate on Iraq.

> As a member of the Senate Intelligence Committee, I firmly believe that the issue of Iraq is not about politics. It's about national security. We know that for at least 20 years, Saddam Hussein has obsessively sought weapons of mass destruction through every means available. *We know that he has chemical and biological weapons today.* He has used them in the past, and he is doing everything he can to build more. Each day he inches closer to his longtime goal of *nuclear capability—a capability that could be less than a year away.*
>
> I believe that Saddam Hussein's Iraqi regime represents a clear threat to the United States, to our allies, to our interests around the world, and to the values of freedom and democracy we hold dear. Saddam has proven his willingness to act irrationally and brutally against his neighbors and

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against his own people. Iraq's destructive capacity has the potential to throw the entire Middle East into chaos, and poses a mortal threat to our vital ally, Israel.

What's more, the terrorist threat against America is all too clear. Thousands of terrorist operatives around the world would pay anything to get their hands on Saddam's arsenal, and there is every possibility that he could turn his weapons over to these terrorists. No one can doubt that if the terrorists of September 11th had had weapons of mass destruction, they would have used them. On September 12, 2002, we can hardly ignore the terrorist threat, and the serious danger that Saddam would allow his arsenal to be used in aid of terror [emphasis added].

Edwards was every bit as hawkish a month later, in an October 10, 2002, floor speech: "Almost no one disagrees with these basic facts: that Saddam Hussein is a tyrant and a menace; that he has weapons of mass destruction and that he is doing everything in his power to get nuclear weapons; that he has supported terrorists; that he is a grave threat to the region, to vital allies like Israel, and to the United States; and that he is thwarting the will of the international community and undermining the United Nations' credibility."

Edwards today calls the war a diversion and adventure that has undermined U.S. efforts to get Osama bin Laden. Back then, he explicitly rejected such suggestions: "I believe this is not an either-or choice. Our national security requires us to do both, and we can." Edwards today calls the Iraq war "needless." Back then, he argued that "the national security of our country requires action."

Dick Cheney changed his mind about the necessity of ousting Saddam Hussein because the circumstances changed. Has John Edwards done the same? ♦

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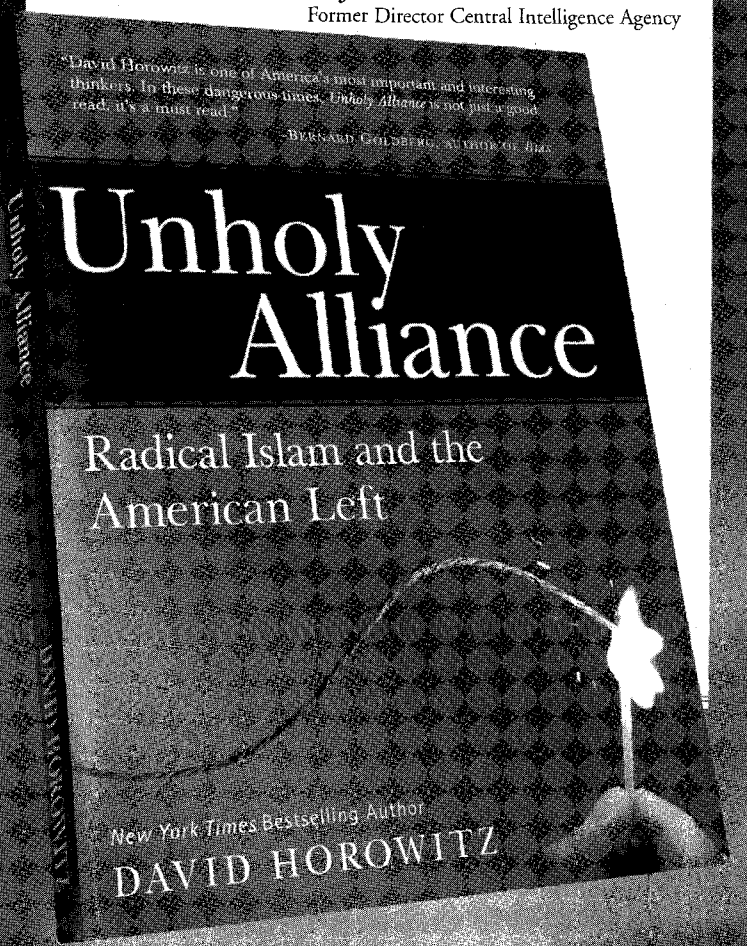

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It's Still His Party

Tony Blair may be lonely on Iraq, but Labour will follow him nonetheless. BY IRWIN M. STELZER

Brighton

TONY BLAIR came to this seaside resort to stamp his authority on a party in revolt over his decision to side with America in Iraq. He succeeded—just. And paid the price of the tensions caused by this long-running intraparty war and last week's showdown. As his party's annual conference ended, the prime minister announced that he planned to serve a full new five-year term if re-elected—no surprise—and then shocked his audience by revealing that he had experienced a recurrence of the irregular heartbeat for which he was treated for almost a year ago. Blair then checked into a hospital for a two-and-a-half hour procedure to restore his heart rhythm to normal. It worked, a good thing since he has much to do.

Crime in Britain is rising, educational standards are falling, bogus asylum-seeking is out of control, and the budget deficit signals that taxes will have to go up if the Labour government is to maintain its breathtaking expansion of the welfare state. No matter. The delegates gathered here by the shore for the Labour party's annual conference are more or less content with Tony Blair's domestic program as he laid it out last week: child care available to all from the age of two; four weeks' paid vacation and 12 months' maternity leave with pay; health care for all "without any regard to . . . wealth"; "a doubling of investment in drug treatment"; programs to put "power, wealth and opportunity in the hands of the many, not the few"; a rise in the minimum wage to about $9 per hour.

And they are positively ecstatic over his earlier decision to allow them to vent their class hatred by voting to ban fox hunting—a vote that will end the livelihoods of thousands of hard-working kennel-keepers, stable hands, hotel workers, and others who have never seen the inside of a grand manor; a vote from which the prime minister abstained; and a vote that triggered some bizarre protests during the conference. If your taste runs to ogling comely young (and therefore not a random sample of the breed) huntswomen as they strip down to thongs-with-bunny-tails, and plaster "Bollocks to Blair" stickers to their buttocks in protest against the ban before dashing into the chilly Channel, Brighton was the place to be last week.

Blair's domestic program was red meat for the pride of lions that constitute the activist wing of his party. In part, he was acting on his deeply held conviction that he must use the remaining years of his political life—he will undoubtedly be elected to another five-year term sometime in the spring of 2005—to create what he calls "a just society and a strong community . . . [with] the individual . . . the driver of the system, not the state." A consumer-driven welfare state is in Britain's future if Blair, rather than the trade unions that constitute the principal financial backers and door-bell ringers of his party, has his way.

But in part, too, he was reminding those in his party who violently oppose his cooperation with America in ridding Iraq of Saddam Hussein that he is indeed a man of the left, a social democrat to his core. That, and his proven ability to get all those now-grumpy politicians elected, is meant to offset the political liability of Iraq, a liability very much in the minds of delegates who had just learned of the deaths of two more British soldiers in Iraq, and who have been bombarded daily with stories and images of the hostage Kenneth Bigley and the agony of his family. Bigley's brother addressed a fringe meeting to demand that Blair save "Ken," as he is now known throughout Britain, by withdrawing from Iraq, an appeal made even more poignant by front-page photos of the hostage's 86-year-old mother being taken to the hospital after collapsing from stress. Adding to the prime minister's problems was the withdrawal of Tory support for his policy: Opposition leader Michael Howard unhelpfully chimed in with an interview in which he claimed that Blair "lied . . . over Iraq," an even more serious charge than an earlier one that prompted Karl Rove to ban Howard from the White House.

Blair's advisers had urged him to avoid any mention of Iraq in his address to the conference. He was having none of such advice, so after addressing what he called the "normal run of politics," he turned to Iraq, opening with a well-received acknowledgment that the evidence about Saddam's having weapons of mass destruction had turned out to be wrong. Then the stinger in the tail of this admission: "The problem is that I can apologize for the information that turned out to be wrong, but I can't, sincerely at least, apologize for removing Saddam. The world is a better place with Saddam in prison, not in power." In any event, his quasi-apology did the prime minister little good: An instant poll showed that 83 percent say Blair's admission has done nothing to end the intraparty dispute over his policy in Iraq.

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Blair then rejected two criticisms: that he has been "pandering to George Bush . . . in a cause that's irrelevant to us," and that the war in Iraq has "made matters worse, not better." You can only believe those arguments, he said, if you believe that we are facing isolated acts of terrorism by isolated individuals—"not qualitatively different from the terrorism we have always lived with." In which case, best not to provoke them.

His view is different, and worth quoting at length in the hope that Bush's speechwriters might find inspiration in it:

> This is a wholly new phenomenon, a worldwide global terrorism based on a perversion of the true, peaceful, honorable faith of Islam; . . . its roots are not superficial but deep, in the madrassas of Pakistan, in the extreme forms of Wahhabi doctrine in Saudi Arabia, in the training camps of al Qaeda in Afghanistan; in the cauldron of Chechnya; in parts of the politics of most countries of the Middle East and many in Asia; in the extremist minority that now in every European city preach hatred of us and our way of life. If you take this view, you believe September 11th changed the world . . . and the only path to take is to confront this terrorism and remove it root and branch. . . . Don't believe the terrorists are in Iraq to liberate it.

There's more, and just as good. All of which earned Blair some applause—best described as mild: Many of the delegates sat on their hands. Not until, that is, he uttered the words so dear to the hearts of the Labour activists who truly believe that none of this would have happened—not September 11, not Bali, not Beslan, not Madrid—if only the Israelis would end their oppression of the Palestinians.

The most enthusiastic applause for this portion of Blair's remarks came, first, when he promised to make a revival of the Middle East peace process "a personal priority . . . after November." Ah, after the American elections, when most delegates believe John Kerry will be president-elect, and the hated George W. Bush will be packing his cowboy boots, guns, and antiabortion pamphlets for a return to Crawford, Texas. The second round of cheers followed Blair's statement that "two states, Israel and Palestine, living side by side in enduring peace, would do more to defeat this terrorism than bullets alone can ever do." So it is those beastly Israelis, after all, who are responsible for everything from the destruction of the World Trade Center to the current insurgency in Iraq.

EPA / Landov / Chris Young

Huntsmen protesters outside the Labour party conference in Brighton, September 28

Blair knows better. He knows that Osama bin Laden is not some Palestinian freedom fighter. He knows, too, that Abu Musab al-Zarqawi has the deaths of Western and even Shia infidels as his goal, not better lives for the Palestinians or, indeed, most Iraqis.

But this observer is inclined to forgive the prime minister a statement that he must have known would be interpreted by his party's largely anti-Israel base as an attack on Israel. For one thing, he was fighting to prevent the delegates from adopting a resolution calling for the immediate withdrawal of British troops from Iraq. It wasn't until late Wednesday evening, hours before the resolution to demand withdrawal was to come to a vote, and almost certainly to be carried, that Foreign Secretary Jack Straw and the prime minister brokered a deal with the trade unions who dominate the conference. In return for certain as-yet-unrevealed promises to push workplace legislation that the unions have been demanding, Straw and Blair got them to sign on to a compromise resolution that acknowledges that U.N. Resolution 1546, adopted unanimously by the Security Council in August, mandates the departure of U.K. forces at the end of 2005, unless—and here is the clause that Straw and Blair fought for—the Iraqi government asks that they remain.

Also, those who watch Blair's question time on C-SPAN will know that he has consistently pointed out to his anti-Israel, we-hate-Sharon critics that there can be no progress in the Middle East until the Palestinians stop the intifada. That not only irritates a significant number of members of his own party, but causes a great deal of tut-tutting by the BBC-led chattering classes at their dinner parties.

Finally, keep in mind that as large a portion of the delegates in Brighton would, given the chance, vote for John Kerry as would the delegates who gathered in Boston. Indeed, Blair's deputy prime minister, John

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Prescott, who runs the country when Blair is unavailable, has called George W. Bush "another right-winger who used compassionate conservatism as his sound bite." Nevertheless, in reviewing issues such as global warming, and the problems of Africa, Blair admonished this anti-Bush and largely anti-American crowd, "Understand this reality. Little of it [reform] will happen except in alliance with the United States." The loud applause he received when calling for greater participation in the European Union turned to stony silence when he added, "I know to cast out the transatlantic alliance would be disastrous for Britain."

So his geopolitical vision remains as it has been since he took office in 1997: Britain has a moral obligation to spread Western values to peoples "the world over"; the alliance with America must be maintained; Britain must adopt the euro and the new European constitution to remain at the head table in a united Europe's policy discussions; Britain is the natural leader of the new members of the E.U., notably the former Soviet satellites, creating a counterpoise to the Franco-German alliance; and Blair's special relationship with America, combined with his leadership of Europe, will make Britain the indispensable bridge between the feuding Europe and America. Britannia might no longer rule the waves, but she will dominate international relations.

Nothing that happened in Brighton should encourage Blair to believe that he is any closer to garnering his party's support for this grand (grandiose?) vision than he was before he spent a less than delightful week at the shore. He remains a lonely leader, sustained by the one thing his political partners understand: Iraq or no Iraq, he is their meal ticket. As if to emphasize their dependence on his ability to attract the middle-England voters the Labour party needs if it is to remain in power, Blair chose, Moses-like, to summarize his program in ten major points, a reminder that it is he who led them out of the wilderness of opposition. ♦

Blood Brothers

Why the leading practitioners of late abortion wrote checks to Kerry. BY DOUGLAS JOHNSON

MARTIN HASKELL, George Tiller, and Warren Hern have several things in common. All three are abortionists who specialize in late abortions. Haskell's name is closely linked with the partial-birth abortion method. Tiller and Hern may be the only two abortionists in the United States who openly advertise their willingness to perform third-trimester abortions.

Finally, all three men have opened their checkbooks to support Senator John Kerry's bid to be president of the United States. Their contributions to Kerry's campaign total $7,000.

That is not a vast sum compared with the millions being spent by liberal groups to attack President Bush. (Federal law limits a contributor to maximum total donations of $4,000 to a single presidential candidate, split between two types of campaign accounts.) Nevertheless, these contributions are worth scrutinizing because of what they reveal about John Kerry.

Although Haskell, Tiller, and Hern have been controversial figures for many years in national debates about late abortions (as anybody can ascertain by entering their names into Google), the Kerry campaign apparently readily accepted the contributions—money that might very well have originated in fees charged to perform partial-birth abortions or other late abortions.

But why would such men send their hard-earned dollars to Kerry? After all, Kerry told Chris Wallace on *Fox News Sunday*, on January 25, 2004, "I'm against partial-birth abortion, as are many people." And Kerry told Peter Jennings of ABC News, in an interview broadcast July 22, 2004, "I oppose abortion, personally. I don't like abortion. I believe life does begin at conception."

My bet is that the abortionists know that during his 20 years in the Senate, Kerry has been an absolutely consistent defender of abortion. So why should they be bothered by statements intended only to mislead voters who are strongly opposed to the grisly business that these men are in—voters who are still unfamiliar with Kerry's actual record?

Most likely, these abortionists are quite aware that Kerry has promised to nominate only Supreme Court justices who share his real position on abortion policy—which would guarantee that partial-birth abortions and other late abortions, and of course earlier abortions, would remain almost entirely shielded from scrutiny or restriction by elected lawmakers for the foreseeable future.

Dr. Martin Haskell wrote the Kerry for President campaign a check for $2,000, recorded June 30, 2004. Haskell, based in Ohio, owns three abortion clinics, all called Women's Med Center. In 1992 Haskell published a paper describing how to perform what he called "dilation and extraction." Circulation of this paper led to introduction of the Partial-Birth Abortion Ban Act by congressman Charles Canady, a Florida Republican, in 1995.

Brenda Pratt Shafer, a nurse who worked briefly at one of Haskell's clinics, witnessed close up the partial-birth abortion of a baby boy who she said was at 26 and a half weeks.

*Douglas Johnson is legislative director for the National Right to Life Committee (*legfederal@aol.com*). Mary Kay Culp, executive director of Kansans for Life, contributed essential research and documentation regarding Dr. George Tiller.*

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"I stood at the doctor's side and watched him perform a partial-birth abortion on a woman who was six months pregnant," Shafer related. "The baby's heartbeat was clearly visible on the ultrasound screen. The doctor delivered the baby's body and arms, everything but his little head. The baby's body was moving. His little fingers were clasping together. He was kicking his feet.

"The doctor took a pair of scissors and inserted them into the back of the baby's head, and the baby's arms jerked out in a flinch, a startle reaction, like a baby does when he thinks that he might fall. Then the doctor opened the scissors up. Then he stuck the high-powered suction tube into the hole and sucked the baby's brains out. Now the baby was completely limp. I never went back to the clinic. But I am still haunted by the face of that little boy. It was the most perfect, angelic face I have ever seen."

Haskell wrote that he used this method on *all* of his clients from 20 through 24 weeks, *unless* they had certain health problems, and on "selected" clients through 26 weeks. He told *American Medical News* that 80 percent of his late abortions were "purely elective." The head of the National Coalition of Abortion Providers admitted to the *New York Times* in 1997 that the method is used thousands of times annually, and that "in the vast majority of cases, the procedure is performed on a healthy mother with a healthy fetus that is 20 weeks or more along."

It seems that none of that really bothers John Kerry, who has voted for unsuccessful amendments to allow partial-birth abortions without any restriction whatever during the entire period of pregnancy that Haskell acknowledges performing them, *and* to allow abortions for "health" reasons (the term includes emotional "health") even later than that. After those killer amendments were rejected, Kerry voted every time (six times) against passage of the Partial-Birth Abortion Ban Act.

Haskell and Kerry both have a knack for compartmentalization. In 1993, *Cincinnati Medicine* asked Haskell, "Does it bother you that a second trimester fetus so closely resembles a baby?" Haskell replied, "I really don't think about it. . . . Many of our patients have ethical dilemmas about abortion. I don't feel it's my role as a physician to tell her she should not have an abortion because of her ethical feelings. . . . I'm not to tell them what's right or wrong."

Kerry explained in 1972: "On abortion, I myself, by belief and upbringing, am opposed to abortion, but as a legislator, as one who is called on to pass a law, I would find it very difficult to legislate on something God himself has not seen fit to make clear to all the people on this earth."

Dr. George Tiller runs an abortion facility in Wichita, Kansas. He sent the Kerry campaign a contribution of $1,000, recorded March 17, 2004.

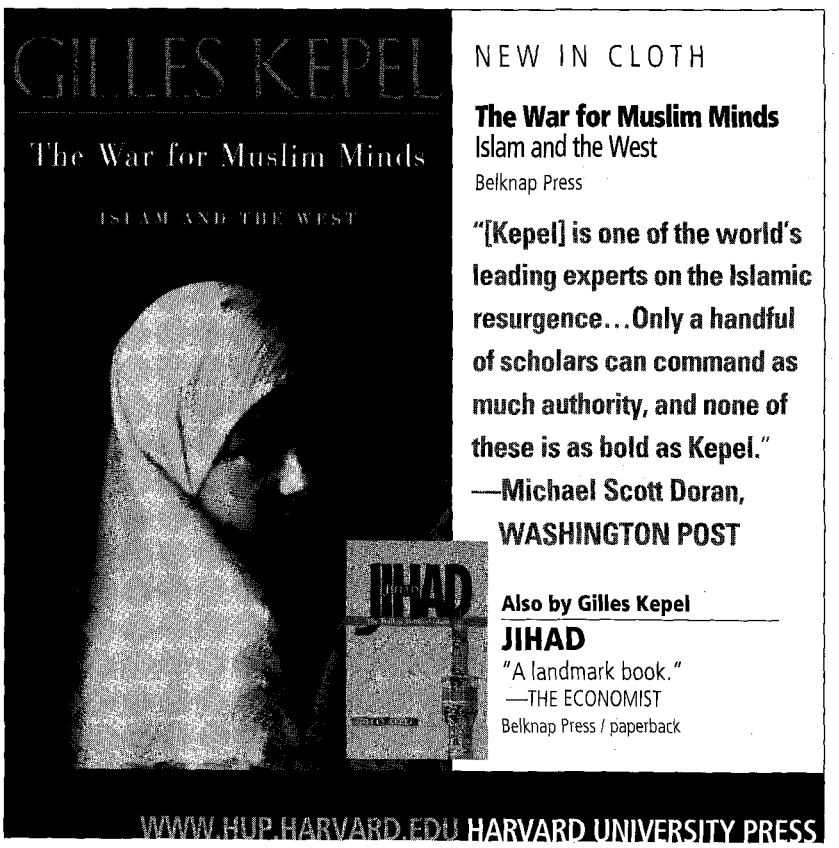
A full-term pregnancy is 40 weeks (counted from the end of the last menstrual period). Tiller performs abortions on request through 26 weeks, or near the end of the sixth month. He uses various methods, but often favors killing the fetus by injecting digoxin into his or her chest to stop the heart, followed by induction of labor and/or manual removal of the dead baby.

Tiller's clinic website (*www.drtiller.com/mainpg.html*) explains, "We are able to perform elective abortions to the time in the pregnancy when the fetus is viable. Viability is not a set point in time."

When most doctors use the term "viability," they mean the point at which a premature infant can survive outside the mother with modern neonatal medical support, which is generally about 23 or 24 weeks, or about 5 and a half months.

But Tiller operates on a different definition, which he calls "survivalhood."

A spokeswoman for Tiller explained, "Our philosophy basically is that, prior to 26 weeks, without massive neonatal intensive care, you do not have survivalhood." Tiller himself has said, "Through the end of the sec-



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ond trimester, when *natural survivalhood* does not exist, women have the right to continue a pregnancy or end that pregnancy" (italics added).

So, although with proper neonatal care over two-thirds of babies born prematurely at 26 weeks now survive long-term, they are still eligible for purely elective abortion under Tiller's "survivalhood" doctrine.

What about abortions *after* 26 weeks? In a 1995 speech, Tiller spoke of performing abortions as late as *36 weeks.*

It is not entirely clear what Tiller's criteria are for abortions after the 26th week. In 1992, the *New York Times* ran an article about Tiller, Hern, and the late James McMahon. (McMahon, who died in 1995, developed the partial-birth abortion method.) The paper reported: "All three say they are uncomfortable doing late abortions unless the fetus is abnormal or the woman's physical or mental health is endangered. But they make their decisions case by case and come down firmly on the side of the woman's right to decide whether she wants to continue her pregnancy. They say they do not have specific guidelines on what circumstances justify an abortion or when it is too late to perform one. The woman, not the fetus, is their patient, they say."

Tiller's website is less explicit. It says, "Kansas law allows for post-viability abortion procedures when continuing the pregnancy is detrimental to the pregnant woman's health. Each person's circumstances are reviewed on a case-by-case basis. Please call so that we can discuss admission criteria with you."

A lot of callers apparently meet the criteria, as the website asserts that Tiller's clinic has "more experience in late abortion services over 24 weeks than anyone else currently practicing in the Western Hemisphere, Europe and Australia." Tiller himself wrote in 2003, "I am the outpatient abortion provider of the last resort in the United States, the Western Hemisphere and Australia."

Does Kerry wish to protect what Tiller does? Not if you believe what he told ABC in the interview broadcast July 22: "What the Supreme Court has established is a test of viability as to whether or not you're permitted to terminate a pregnancy, and I support that. That is my test."

In reality, however, Kerry has voted for unsuccessful measures to require that abortion be available even in the final three months of pregnancy for "health" reasons, which include emotional "health." Beyond that, it seems that Kerry would leave the definition of viability entirely in the hands of each abortionist. He cosponsored the Freedom of Choice Act in the early 1990s. This bill would have forbidden states to place restrictions on abortion until after "viability," *with "viability" defined by the abortionist.*

In short, Kerry has consistently supported enactment of federal statutes that would protect everything that Tiller does. But Tiller won't need the shield of such statutes if Kerry gets to pick Supreme Court justices.

Warren Hern, between September 15, 2003, and June 25, 2004, made three contributions totaling $4,000 to two Kerry accounts, the maximum permitted by law.

Hern is the owner and director of the Boulder Abortion Clinic. Hern has developed refinements of various abortion methods, including the dismemberment procedures called "dilation and evacuation." In an early paper on such D&Es, he wrote, "There is no possibility of denial of an act of destruction by the operator. It is before one's eyes. The sensations of dismemberment flow through the forceps like an electric current."

According to the clinic's website (*www.drhern.com*), it offers "outpatient elective abortion through 26 weeks." (Again, more than two-thirds of infants born at 26 weeks now survive long-term.)

Hern also offers abortions "up to 36 weeks"—that is, the end of the eighth month—when "medically indicated." Such very late abortions are often performed because of "fetal anomalies," but in a 1992 letter, Hern listed rape, incest, and "extreme youth" of the mother as examples of reasons for performing abortions "up to 34 menstrual weeks' gestation."

How compatible are John Kerry's views with those of Warren Hern? Kerry told ABC in July, "Let me tell you very clearly that being pro-choice is not pro-abortion . . . and I think we need to adhere to the standard that Bill Clinton, in fact, so adeptly framed, that abortion should be rare, but legal and safe."

Well, the term "pro-abortion" can surely be aptly applied to Hern, who wrote that pregnancy should be regarded not as a normal state but as an illness which "may be treated by evacuation of the uterus." Elsewhere he wrote that pregnancy is most appropriately compared to infestation by a parasite. He is a strong proponent of population control, who has written that population growth has made the human race itself an "ecotumor" or "planetary malignancy."

It wouldn't make much sense to say that an effective anti-parasite or anti-cancer treatment should be used only "rarely," so it might seem that Kerry and Hern have divergent views on this point.

But here too, Kerry's record says otherwise. Despite Kerry's adoption of Clinton's "adeptly framed" verbal formula that abortion should be "rare," Kerry has consistently voted in favor of making abortion an integral part of U.S.-funded population control programs. Indeed, Kerry has pledged that if elected president, he would use his very first executive order to overturn President Bush's policy of not funding private organizations that promote abortion in foreign nations.

"Abortions need to be moved out of the fringes of medicine and into the mainstream of medical practice," Kerry explained in 1994.

Early this year, Kate Michelman, the longtime president of the National Abortion Rights Action League, told the *New York Times*, "Even on the most difficult issues, we've never had to worry about John Kerry's position."

Like Kate Michelman, Doctors Haskell, Tiller, and Hern know their man. ♦

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Murderous Monotheists

What Zarqawi believes.

BY STEPHEN SCHWARTZ

FACED WITH the series of beheadings and other grisly crimes committed in Iraq by the followers of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, Westerners may wonder why this gang should call itself "Monotheism and Jihad." The group's Arabic name, *Tawhid wa'al-Jihad*, is often misleadingly translated "Unity and Jihad," which could lead English-speakers to suppose that Zarqawi and company are acting in the name of a united Iraqi nation, or of Arab unity, or of solidarity among jihadists or Muslims generally.

Stephen Schwartz is the author of The Two Faces of Islam.

But *Tawhid* does not mean "unity," much less "unification"; it means "uniqueness," as in the uniqueness of God the Creator. To understand the theology behind this word is to appreciate the identity of the "foreign fighters" around Zarqawi—himself born in Jordan—and the purpose of their kidnappings and beheadings.

All Muslims, of course, are monotheists. Islam rejects the multiple gods and goddesses of the pagan religions, and proclaims the creation of the universe by a single God. But in the 18th century, Muhammad Ibn Abd al-Wahhab, founder of the Wahhabi sect, asserted that Muslims had fallen away from true monotheism back into pagan unbelief: worship of multiple gods, or polytheism. Wahhabism, now the state religion of Saudi Arabia, continues to assert that Islam as practiced in nearly the whole of the global Muslim community outside the Saudi kingdom is actually apostasy.

The Arabic term for polytheism is *shirk*, or "assigning partners to Allah." According to the Wahhabi creed, in recent centuries, only the followers of Ibn Abd al-Wahhab and their descendants have been true monotheists. All non-Wahhabis—whether nominally Muslim, Jewish, Christian, Hindu, or Buddhist—are steeped in *shirk* and deserve to be killed so that pure Wah-

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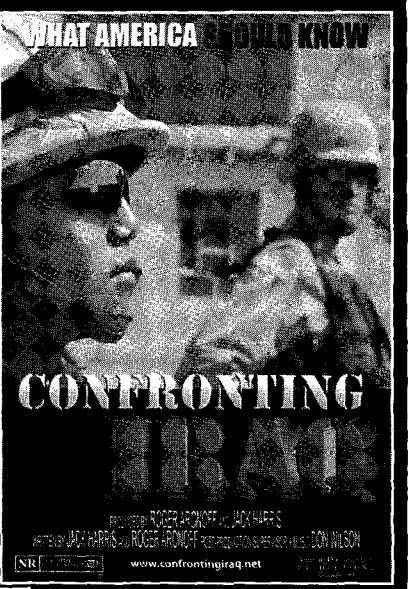

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habi monotheism can reign supreme.

In this twisted view, the majority of Iraqis are guilty of *shirk*. Up to 70 percent of Iraqis belong to the Shia sect of Islam, and as such follow the guidance of their imams and ayatollahs, wise theologians recognized for their study and insight. According to the Wahhabis, to follow a supreme cleric or *marja* like Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, leader of the Iraqi Shias, is to place him on an equal level with God. Shias should therefore be killed as polytheists, their property confiscated, and their women dishonored.

Wahhabis also hate Shias because they erect elaborate tombs for their martyrs and outstanding clerics and pray at these graves. Wahhabis believe that the very existence of graveyards and tombs is a kind of double polytheism, in which the person memorialized in the grave is elevated to equality with God, and the gravestone or tomb becomes an idol; to pray in cemeteries is, in Wahhabi eyes, to commit an abomination. Thus, once the Shias are killed, their holy sites must be torn down and their graveyards desecrated.

For this reason, the beheadings carried out in the name of "monotheism" in Iraq are aimed not only at terrorizing Westerners, but equally at intimidating Shias. We must understand that Iraqi Shias know this, and will help us in the struggle to extirpate Zarqawi and his gangsters.

Wahhabis equally accuse Sufis of polytheism. Sufism is a spiritual Islamic tradition influenced by Christianity and Eastern religions that is the dominant form of Islam in much of the world, notably French West Africa, much of North Africa, the Balkans, Turkey, Central Asia, India, and Indonesia. Once again, the Wahhabis' virulent hatred is excited by the Sufi practice of discipleship, with sheikhs as teachers, and the Sufi devotion to praying at graves and maintaining the tombs of saints. Westerners sometimes believe that saints are absent from Islam. But they are not; in Kazakhstan, a country dominated by Sufism, a common, traditional prayer runs: "*Thousands of saints in Turkestan / Thousands of saints in Turkestan / I pray for your aid.*"

Prayers to saints and to the Prophet Muhammad for intercession with the Creator, along with obedience to sheikhs and preservation of burial sites, make the Sufis, from the Wahhabi viewpoint, deserving of slaughter and pillage. Since Sufism is the dominant form of Islam among Iraqi Kurds, each beheading by the Zarqawi conspiracy threatens them.

Obviously, Jews and Christians do not fare well in the Wahhabi scheme. As the historian Bernard Lewis pointed out in his authoritative volume *The Jews of Islam*, the Ottoman caliphate recognized and honored the "unflawed monotheism" of the Jews. But the Wahhabis hated the Ottomans as patrons of Sufism and friends of Shiism. Indeed, the Wahhabis loathe the Jews for treating rabbis as religious authorities, and considered them fit only for beheading even before the state of Israel existed. They also deride the Jews for their love of life. Wahhabis brag that they love death.

Finally, there are the Christians, whom Wahhabis despise as practitioners of polytheism because of their faith in the trinity. Above all, their belief that Jesus was God's son and fully divine qualifies all Christians for murder, without argument.

Still, there is a special edge to the Wahhabis' hatred of non-Wahhabi Muslims. As Saudi Wahhabi bigots typically put it: We know the Jews and Christians are our enemies; but the Shias and Sufis are worse, because they want to change *our* religion. (As if Islam had been invented by Ibn Abd al-Wahhab 250 years ago!) This may explain the otherwise peculiar news report in mid-September that a Turkish hostage in Iraq, apparently a born Muslim, was released after he "converted to Islam." Wahhabis believe that mainstream, traditional, moderate, and normal Muslims must undergo a Wahhabi conversion to become real Muslims.

The principal writing of Ibn Abd al-Wahhab is entitled *Kitab al-Tawhid*, or the *Book of Monotheism*. Therein Wahhab proclaimed that Islam had become idolatry, and that he alone had found the perfect means of resolving this "grave problem": namely, the purging of the guilty, whose "blood and property" were no longer to be respected. Wahhab's poisonous tract, published in English translation in Riyadh in 1991, has been widely circulated in the United States, especially among young Muslims on college campuses.

There are additional political lessons here. Zarqawi's Wahhabism did not originate in the country of his birth; it is a Saudi invention. Saudi Arabia prides itself on being known as "the land of *tawhid*." The rhetoric of Monotheism and Jihad betrays the Saudi origin of the terror its acolytes sow far and wide. And in the mosques of Saudi Arabia, state-employed Wahhabi clerics continue to deliver Friday sermons inciting the faithful to "monotheism and jihad"—meaning, first and foremost, passage across Saudi Arabia's long northern border into Iraq to kill and die.

There is a grotesque footnote to this nightmare. As the historian J.B. Kelly has pointed out, Western academic and political apologists for the Saudi state and Wahhabism have often translated the Arabic term "*muwahid'dun*"—or "believers in *tawhid*," the Wahhabis' preferred term for themselves—as "unitarians." If certain powerful figures in the Middle East Studies departments at universities in the United States and elsewhere had their way, current headlines would read "Unitarians Behead Another American."

The final significance of the atrocities committed in the name of Monotheism and Jihad should be obvious: The monsters who perpetrate these crimes are not partisans of resistance to foreign occupation, or Iraqi patriots, or ordinary Muslims angered by a non-Muslim intrusion into an Islamic land. They represent Islamofascism in its purest, Saudi-backed form—ideological, fanatical, and nihilistic. War against them is war to the death, a war they have chosen and from whence, in the view of traditional Muslims, divine punishment awaits them. ♦

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Australian for Bush

Is the coalition of the willing shrinking?

BY DUNCAN CURRIE

OCTOBER 9 will be a big day for the war on terror. In Afghanistan, voters will choose a president. Across the globe, Australians will decide the fate of Prime Minister John Howard. A smooth Afghan election is crucial. But the result Down Under is also important: It may determine whether the United States loses an important ally in Iraq.

Howard, 65, is staunchly pro-American and pro-war. His conservative Liberal-National government was among the first to deploy troops to the Gulf in early 2003. With this decision, Howard went against Aussie public opinion (75 percent opposed the war) and suffered a "no confidence" vote in the Senate (the upper body of the Australian parliament) as a result. Today, Canberra has some 850 military personnel in and around Iraq. The prime minister says they'll remain until the job is finished.

However, his chief opponent, Labor party leader Mark Latham, 43, advocates a quick exit. During a radio interview in March, Latham pledged to bring Australian troops "home for Christmas." This was a gaffe. Polls show Aussies divided on whether sending troops was a mistake, but opposed to an immediate pullout. Latham's popularity dipped. In June, his party tempered its stance to possibly keeping more than 400 Australians in Iraq past Christmas, including those guarding their embassy. Latham then brought on the hawkish and pro-American Kim Beazley as Labor's defense spokesman. Beazley served as Australian defense minister from 1984-1990, during which time he earned the nicknames "Bomber Beazley" and "Kimbo" (after Rambo).

Will Iraq be a salient electoral factor? No, say the Liberals. Yes, but only indirectly, says Labor. Citing Howard's prewar arguments about Saddam Hussein's weapons of mass destruction, Labor has questioned his veracity. Meanwhile, Latham has used Iraq as a wedge on the issue of regional terrorism. "We have become less safe in the war against terror because of the conflict in Iraq," he argued last month. "Why? Because it diverted so many resources from the real task, and for Australia the real task is in our part of the world, in Asia."

Latham made those comments in a TV debate dominated by national security. The prime minister rebuked his "cut and run" strategy. "We should stay and finish the job—that's the Australian way," Howard said. Withdrawing would "send a message that one of the original coalition has weakened and buckled." According to a survey of the studio audience, Latham won the debate with 67 percent to Howard's 33 percent. Labor subsequently gained in national polls.

That must worry George W. Bush, who has a close relationship with Howard. The two have much in common. Both are famously plain-spoken. Both are routinely derided by their opponents in academia and journalism. Both give speeches charged with pro-family rhetoric. Both have pursued a pro-growth economic agenda. Most important, both preach a foreign policy born of 9/11.

Howard was visiting Washington, D.C., on September 11, 2001. He has since laid out his own version of the Bush Doctrine. In December 2002, shortly after the Bali nightclub bombing (which killed 88 Aussies), Howard declared his willingness to launch preemptive strikes against terrorists overseas, with or without United Nations approval. "International law has to catch up with that new reality," he said. This provoked a flurry of outrage in neighboring Asian countries. But Howard stood by his remarks. "I meant what I said," he told reporters. "I was asked a question and I don't seek to qualify the answer."

The prime minister reiterated this preemption doctrine last month, and challenged his rival to endorse it. Latham demurred. Liberal senator Brett Mason, a firm Howard backer, admits the Australian people "are concerned about the principle [of preemption]." Howard maintains a narrow advantage on security. But Latham's anti-preemption stance and Australia-first message have resonated.

Mason also says domestic issues can't be overlooked. "It's the economy, stupid," he jokes. Here, the Aussie PM is rock solid. Australia's economy is barreling ahead at 4.1 percent annual growth. Job creation is up; unemployment and inflation are down. Stocks have soared to historic highs, and interest rates are at 30-year lows.

But health and education, Latham's signature themes, work against Howard. So does Australia's unique electoral apparatus. Like Great Britain, Australia is a parliamentary democracy. But unlike Britain, which relies on first-past-the-post voting, Australia has preferential voting. This system is applied to elections for Canberra's House of Representatives, where the government is formed.

In preferential voting, voters place a number "1" next to their "first

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preference" candidate, and rank the other candidates "2," "3," etc. Election officials then count all the first-preference votes (usually called "primary votes"). To win outright, a candidate must garner over 50 percent of first-preference votes. If no one does, the last-place candidate is eliminated. All his votes are re-allocated based on the number "2" picks listed on those ballots. This process continues until a candidate obtains majority support.

So a party could win the primary round, but lose the preferential vote and thus the election. According to a poll published last week in the *Australian*, that's what might happen on October 9. Howard himself is more popular than Latham, and his Liberal-National coalition holds a 3-point lead in first-preference votes. But once second-preference votes are distributed, Labor jumps to a 4-point advantage. Labor representative Brendan O'Connor says the preferences of left-wing minority parties, such as the Greens, are "flowing mainly back to Labor."

The stakes were raised on September 9, when the al Qaeda-linked Jemaah Islamiyah blew up Australia's embassy in Jakarta. This recalled Spain, where terrorist bombings swayed voters against José María Aznar's pro-American party in March. The motive behind the Jakarta attack is unclear. But some Laborites argue that Howard has made Australia a target. And an AP/Ipsos poll released last week found that 66 percent of Aussies believe the Iraq war has increased the threat of global terrorism. Should Howard lose, pro-U.S. leaders in other allied countries might conclude their positions on Iraq are suicidal.

For that reason, the future of U.S. policy in Iraq is inseparable from the Australian election. Liberal House candidate Michael Shevers may be right when he says, "Most people are sick and tired of talking about it." But on October 9, expect the coalition of the willing to cast more than a passing glance Down Under. ♦

Sorry, Charlie

West Texas Democrats are an endangered species.

BY BETH HENARY

Abilene, TX

CHARLIE STENHOLM prides himself on his independence, on his record of voting his rural district and Christian values rather than simply following the party line. This record has helped the conservative Democrat stay in office for 13 terms, even as Texas has turned sharply Republican over the same period of time.

But this Election Day, Stenholm may finally have to concede the importance of party affiliation. When the state legislature—at the insistence of U.S. House majority leader Tom DeLay—redrew congressional lines to bump most white Texas Democrats from office, Stenholm's home turf of Abilene was squeezed into freshman Republican Randy Neugebauer's District 19. The population center of the new, 27-county District 19 is Lubbock, where Neugebauer lives and once served on the city council. In an added blow for Stenholm, his family farm was placed in a separate district.

The new 19th District votes about 70 percent Republican for statewide offices, and in 2000 it picked President Bush by 75 percent. For his 2002 reelection to District 17, which was nearly as pro-Bush, Stenholm mustered 51 percent against his Republican and Libertarian challengers.

Stenholm is well known in West Texas beyond the boundaries of his old district, and he has long enjoyed crossover support. Many Republicans whisper that they appreciate his standing for rural interests, while others are publicly against ejecting the veteran congressman.

"Charlie has always attracted Republicans in the voting booth and we do not expect that to change," says Stenholm communications director Jodi Zweifler.

Stenholm's strategy is to run on his social conservatism and his dedication to West Texas. In a move designed to bolster his reelection, the Democratic Caucus appointed him to the Armed Services Committee in September. There is an Air Force base in Abilene.

Stenholm touts a *Congressional Quarterly* study that found he voted against his party's majority more than all but one other member, and he criticizes his opponent for routinely backing the Republican leadership.

Neugebauer says he does not check others' votes before he casts his and insists that his record of voting with the House leadership simply means he's conservative. His support for drug reimportation from Canada, he says, demonstrates his willingness to disagree with party leaders.

In an effort to minimize crossover voting, the Neugebauer camp is trying to associate Stenholm with Democratic presidential nominee John Kerry.

"[Politics] is a team sport," Neugebauer says. "Bush, Cheney, and Neugebauer are on the same team. Kerry, Edwards, and Stenholm are on a different team."

Stenholm's campaign has repeatedly stated he is not involved in the presidential race, and no high-profile Democrats have made the trek to West Texas. (Vice President Dick Cheney and House Speaker Dennis Hastert have raised money for Neugebauer.) Stenholm has even run a television commercial showing him shaking hands with Bush, and is disregarding a Rebulican National Committee letter demanding it be taken off the air.

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Neugebauer says that though he likes and respects Stenholm, Stenholm's decision to stay with a leftward-moving party makes the November 2 choice clear for conservative West Texas.

"He's had many opportunities over the years to switch, and he's chosen to be a Democrat," Neugebauer says. "The true conservative Democrats have switched."

A conservative Democrat from northeast Texas, Ralph Hall, switched parties earlier this year, virtually securing another term.

Still, at the annual POW-MIA Recognition Day in Lubbock on September 18, Stenholm reiterated his support for the president in the war on terrorism. He also quoted former President Bush, the veterans-advocacy group Rolling Thunder (which has endorsed President Bush), and the Book of Joshua to the small crowd.

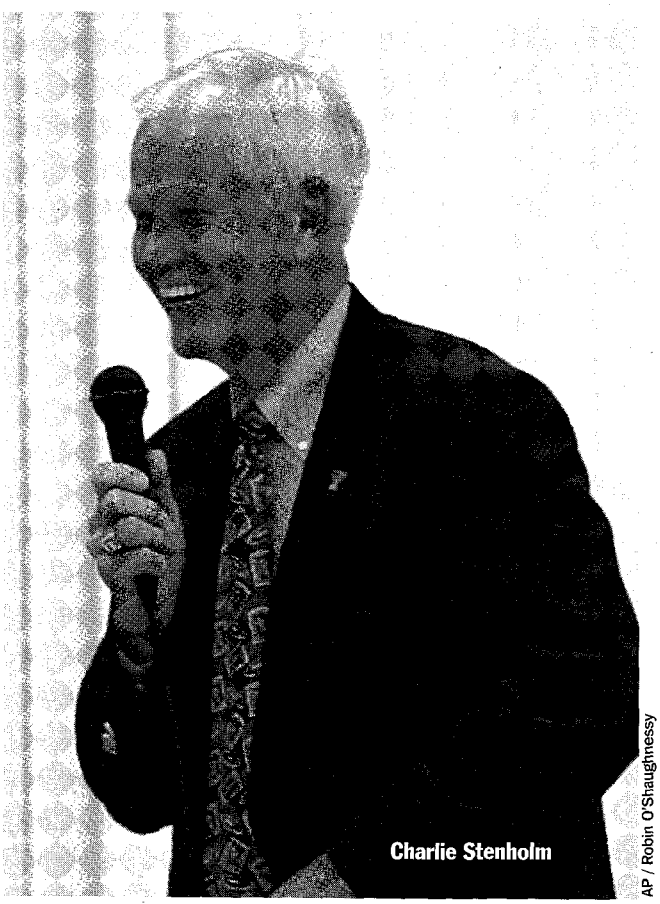
As wrenching as it is to try to knock off a beloved political icon, Randy Neugebauer is no stranger to hard-fought contests. Last year, the professional land developer pushed his way to the front of a 17-candidate field in a special election to replace retiring House Agriculture Committee chairman Larry Combest. He was sworn in six months behind his fellow freshmen.

"We were not looking for this race," Dana Neugebauer, the congressman's wife, confides at a recent campaign stop at a UPS hub in Abilene. The Neugebauers have been on the campaign trail for nearly two years.

The congressman wasted no time in telling UPS workers where he and Stenholm differ.

"I'm a small-government, small-tax guy," said Neugebauer, who has voted for permanently ditching the marriage and death taxes, and for keeping the child tax credit. He also spoke of a more "competitive America" that could come about via lawsuit reform and a lower corporate income tax.

In Stenholm's book, deficit reduction comes before permanent tax cuts. Earlier this year, the Blue Dog Coalition of conservative Democrats—Stenholm is the group's co-chair for policy—proposed extending, but only for one year, the $1,000 child tax credit, marriage penalty relief, and the higher income threshold for the 10 percent income tax rate, all part of Bush's 2001 tax cuts. To pay for it, the Blue Dogs recommended ending certain tax shelters and extending customs user fees.


Charlie Stenholm

AP / Robin O'Shaughnessy

District 19's difficulty in deciding between these two candidates surfaced recently in statements by leaders of AGFUND, the Farm Bureau's political division, after it endorsed Neugebauer. AGFUND supported Neugebauer in his first election but has been a consistent Stenholm backer, too. Both candidates support farm subsidies and have worked to bring federal projects and funds to West Texas. Stenholm is ranking Democrat on the Agriculture Committee.

"Agriculture has been put in an awkward situation because of redistricting," Lubbock County Farm Bureau president Alan West told the Lubbock *Avalanche-Journal*. "[Stenholm] has spent 25 years being a voice for agriculture, and we have nothing but the utmost respect for him. . . . This whole process has been ugly for us and ugly for West Texas."

Not all of Stenholm's traditional supporters have abandoned him. Several members of Republicans for Stenholm, a group of civic leaders in Abilene, recently signed a letter to Republican voters that began: "We're Republicans. We support President Bush. We support our troops. We support Abilene. And we support our Congressman, Charlie Stenholm."

Steve Stovall, who is heading up the effort to convince Republicans to vote for Stenholm, says it's wrong to put a faithful advocate out to pasture, even if he is a Democrat.

"I wish he would have switched parties a long time ago," Stovall says. "But I respect his decision not to do so."

"The Republican leadership didn't have the best interest of West Texas in mind," Stovall says of Texas's redistricting. "A vote for Neugebauer is an affirmation that redistricting was a good thing. If you're going to try to get rid of a Democrat, why would you replace one that's with you most of the time?"

Neugebauer reports a steady eight-point advantage, but if any Democrat can lure Texans across party lines, it's Charlie Stenholm. ♦

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The Battle for Iraq

Forget gradualism and Iraqification—send in the Marines

By Reuel Marc Gerecht

What should we do in Iraq? The U.S. presidential election will likely be won or lost over the war and its aftermath. If the United States fails in Iraq—if it is driven out by violence, and the country descends into internecine strife—then former ambassador (and current Kerry adviser) Richard Holbrooke may well be right: Iraq will be "a mess worse than Vietnam." It's a good bet that few people in the administration, as in the country at large, think the counterinsurgency is going well. It is quite striking to listen to President Bush's speeches about Iraq—about its centrality to the war on terror and the future of America's security—and then talk to officials in the State Department, the Pentagon, and the White House who would rather change the subject. If nothing else, America's second Gulf War will test whether the president of the United States can successfully commit the country to an enormous undertaking—the democratization of an important Muslim state—about which many, if not most, of his diplomats, intelligence officials, and senior soldiers are, at minimum, ambivalent.

President Bush may have seen the necessity of removing a genetically aggressive, weapons-of-mass-destruction-loving Saddam Hussein from a post-9/11 world. He certainly went on to see the essential need to transform the dysfunctional political culture of the Middle East—the nexus between autocracy and Islamic extremism—and the unavoidable task of trying to aid the Iraqis in building a democracy in the Arab world, the birthplace of bin Ladenism. But probably relatively few of the "foreign-policy professionals" and "intelligence experts" below the president see the world similarly. Washington's foreign affairs and intelligence bureaucrats are more or less at one with Senator John Kerry: President Bush has been a rash revolutionary who, among other things, has committed them to an unwanted task that will likely unsettle if not rack them for years to come.

President Bush's strategic vision aside, do his administration's tactics in Iraq make sense? Are any of Kerry's criticisms of the president's plan valid? Is the senator's game plan in any way more astute? The likely answers to these questions are not encouraging.

There is a decent chance that the tactics now in use in Iraq will produce the opposite of what is intended: The insurrection in the Sunni triangle will deepen, and the clerical rebel Moktada al-Sadr and his *Sadriyyin* followers may well roll forth again, with even more force, from their Baghdad Shiite stronghold. Many American officials certainly hope, and appear to believe, that the "gradualist" course now chosen will *eventually* win the day: If U.S. forces abstain from the siege-and-conquest of truly difficult insurgent towns in the Sunni triangle in favor of behind-the-scenes, Iraqi-led negotiations backed by CIA largesse, aerial bombardment, quick ground assaults, and the gradual deployment of more Iraqi paramilitary and police units, an inglorious but lasting victory will follow. Yet the administration may well be setting itself up for a perfect storm of Arab Sunni intransigence, fundamentalism, and betrayal. The White House should take little comfort in knowing that Kerry's ideas are even worse. Kerry's plan, when not surreal—the French and the Germans, who tried to ease sanctions on Saddam Hussein, and who opposed the war on nationalist, internationalist, European, pacifist, and capitalist principles, have little desire to aid America now—is unsound, precisely because it repeats and amplifies the bad counterinsurgency ideas of the Bush administration.

The senator and the Bush administration see the "Iraqification" of the conflict as the all-critical component in pacifying the country and setting the stage for a gradual American withdrawal. When Iraqis become responsible for their own destiny, when they directly

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fight those who are bombing city streets, highways, and oil pipelines, so the theory goes, the anti-American/anti-foreigner quality to this insurrection will diminish. Iraq is for Iraqis, and they more than Americans really ought to fight for it. Whether you're talking about the military brass under the Middle East's Central Command chief General John Abizaid or the civilian leadership of the Pentagon, the commanders in the field and in Washington have developed a view that American soldiers on the ground can be too provocative. Their movements, let alone their military actions, can cause a nationalist backlash among Iraqis of all stripes. Hence the need for American troops to keep a lower profile, at least lower than they did when Ambassador L. Paul Bremer and the Coalition Provisional Authority ruled Iraq. The Americans need to have Iraqis with them, preferably in front of them, to deflect the anger that comes from a proud people with stronger foreigners in their midst. According to administration officials, Iraqi prime minister Ayad Allawi agrees with this assessment. Once upon a time, the Iraqi National Congress's Ahmad Chalabi also emphasized these sentiments to U.S. officials.

This view, of course, accords well with the Pentagon's dominant ethic of force protection and domestic political concerns about U.S. casualty rates. But the primary factor at play here is the understanding of what makes the Iraqis tick, in particular those who hate us but have not yet joined the armed insurrection. Although Kerry has not yet spoken or written in sufficient detail about Iraq to determine his view on this most basic analytical question, odds are good that the senator would agree with those in the Bush administration who fear that more Americans in combat in Iraq might well make things worse. (Since the senator has called for both more troops and no more troops in Iraq, it is difficult to assess his stand precisely.) Democratic senator Joseph Biden, who is a senior adviser to Kerry and rivals Ambassador Holbrooke in TV time advancing the Kerry campaign, has perhaps put the Democratic critique most forthrightly. "We have to help train up their [Iraqi] forces. That's the key. That's the ultimate exit strategy, and the secretary of defense said in February [2004] that we have trained 220,000 Iraqi military. . . . That was malarkey." Biden, like Kerry, wants to see a more rapid, massive deployment of Iraqi military and paramilitary police units, and the Bush administration has so far failed to deliver this supposed sine qua non for American success.

Communities and towns built by and for Baathists were left largely undisturbed. These men hope that the old order in some fashion can be reborn.

But this bipartisan position is likely to be our undoing. Basic point: The United States is engaged in a revolution in Iraq. We have toppled Saddam Hussein, the Baath party, and the Sunni Arab dominion over the country. We have promised to help the Iraqi people establish a democracy, which means that we are the midwife of a political system that will empower the Shia, who constitute at least 60 percent of Iraq's population. This is an enormous shock to Iraq's Arab Sunnis, who may represent as much as 25 percent, but quite possibly no more than 15 percent, of all Iraqis. Many in the Muslim Middle East hate and fear the Anglo-American invasion of Iraq. One of the principal reasons is Sunni antipathy for the American-delivered Shiite new order.

Even Iraqi Arab Sunnis who loathed Saddam Hussein (probably a majority) and were happy about his fall (perhaps a majority) remain enormously anxious about the rise of the Shia. Many of them surely would like to believe a new Sunni order could be established. A year ago in Iraq, before the violence in the Sunni triangle became ferocious, I could feel the hope among ordinary Sunnis that their power and prestige could somehow be recovered. I could feel it among Sunnis who had no love of Saddam Hussein and the Baath, and only mildly disliked the Americans for liberating them. And a failure to fully appreciate the revolutionary implications of America's actions for the Sunnis led to the second major error. (The first was the Pentagon's failure to prevent the looting of Baghdad.) After the rapid fall of the capital, the Americans didn't aggressively vacuum up former Baathist military officers and intelligence officials into detention camps. Communities and towns built by and for Baathists were left largely undisturbed. These men really hope that the old order in some fashion can be reborn. Their desired new order is, even more than the old, aggressively non-Shiite, since the Shiites showed in April 2003 they had no problem with President Bush's liberation of their country.

The Americans then made another large mistake. The Pentagon, the State Department, and the CIA—the three powers running the Coalition Provisional Authority—did not realize how religious identity among Arab Sunnis had grown. The signs of a vibrant fundamentalism were there: the sermons, the preachers, the change of dress, personal manners, and language, and the graffiti written on the walls, and the hard-core books and

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pamphlets in the markets. The Americans and their highly secularized Iraqi translators often mistook Iraqi *salafis* for foreign fundamentalists. (The same may be true today for Prime Minister Allawi and other highly secularized, older Iraqi exiles, who have a noticeable blindness when it comes to seeing the vibrancy of Islamic militancy in post-Saddam Iraq. We would be wise to be skeptical about Allawi's contention that foreign jihadists are "pouring" into the country.) In the spring of 2003, Washington delivered demarches to Riyadh protesting Wahhabi missionary activity.

The growth of Sunni fundamentalism in Iraq perhaps started in the 1970s. It's very difficult to know for sure since the Orwellian tyranny of Saddam allowed for no reliable Western or Arab observation and comment. Elsewhere in the Sunni Arab world, including in Baathist Syria, the 1970s saw fundamentalism take off. What seems sure is that by the late 1980s and 1990s it was growing in Iraq. The country was catching up with the rest of the Sunni Arab world, where Islamic activism was gaining the intellectual and moral high ground. From the late 1980s forward, Saddam Hussein became an enthusiastic mosque-builder—perhaps the most energetic mosque-builder Islam had seen. Regardless of what lurked in Saddam's soul, the Butcher of Baghdad knew the changing sentiments of his Sunni base. With the fall of Saddam and his withered Baathist creed, the Sunni religious identity blossomed. The Shiites, too, have experienced an increased religiosity since April 2003, though it appears to be tempered by their traditional clergy and the much-discussed excesses and failures of the clerical regime in Shiite Iran.

State Department, CIA, Pentagon, and National Security Council officials usually talk about a Baathist core to the insurrection in the Sunni triangle. Perhaps. It is more likely, however, that Sunni fundamentalism has been consuming the Baath for years. Since Saddam's collapse, this slow-motion invasion of Baathist body-snatchers has likely gained significant speed. In Falluja, this is obviously the case. The growing range and boldness of the guerrilla-cum-terrorist actions suggests something more vigorous and young than the remnants of the Baath.

Sunni militants are unquestionably men of hope, who believe fervently that they can drive the Americans out and create another Sunni-dominated state. And the Americans have certainly given them cause to cheer. The "gradualist" approach of the Bush administration has been a gift. The American retreat at Falluja was an enormous fillip to their pride and self-confidence. As the militants have grown stronger, U.S. soldiers have increasingly withdrawn from Iraqi streets. While the Americans have wanted to seem less provocative to the Iraqi people, they have certainly sent a different image to the holy warriors and ex-Baathists. Washington forgot historical rule number one about getting enemies to surrender and acquiesce: You must first beat them. They must see clearly that they have no hope. In a Middle Eastern context, your *hayba*, the awe that comes with indomitable power, must overwhelm them. This has not happened in Iraq since the fall of Saddam.

Indeed, from day one of the Coalition Provisional Authority nearly the opposite has occurred. America wanted to be rather nice to the Sunni base of Saddam's power in the hope of placating it, of getting it to play along. (The CIA's dogged advancing of the pro-Sunni, Baathist-sympathetic, Shiite Ayad Allawi and the White House's approval of him as prime minister was the culmination of this attitude.) The American retreat started in earnest in Baghdad last year, when Washington and the Provisional Authority decided to reduce the number of military outposts throughout the city. To Ambassador Bremer's credit, he warned that violence in Baghdad was likely to go up as the number of outposts decreased. But the "gradualist" ethic had taken hold: American troops were no longer seen primarily as agents of order but as catalysts for trouble. Iraqi policemen, backed more selectively and discreetly by U.S. soldiers, would do a better job. The result: Violence and crime skyrocketed in the capital as the American security perimeter shrank. And what happened in Baghdad has now happened in much of the Sunni triangle.

The situation is worse in 2004 because American officials and soldiers have become even more attached to the idea that Iraqi forces are the key to our salvation. Consider the symbolism of what we are doing. Do Sunni militants, ex-Baathists, and ordinary Iraqis think American soldiers, who come out now only in heavily armed convoys and rarely spend the night, look like troops that have the will to beat diehard Sunni fundamentalists? How does it look when the Americans hunker down in their heavily armored vehicles while the Iraqi security forces voyage out in easily obliterated pick-up trucks? The Iraqis are getting pummeled much worse than we are. For whom does this inspire confidence? For whom fear? And the worst is still to come.

There are obviously many brave Iraqi Sunni Arabs who have given their lives or are willing to give their lives to see a new, more humane order in Iraq. But how many? The tens of thousands that probably will be necessary to quiet the insurrectionist Sunni triangle? The legions that Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld

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promises and Senator Biden wants at once? When I have spoken to military, military intelligence, and CIA officers about who is being recruited into the new Iraqi army, paramilitary units, and police, I have not been persuaded that much due diligence is being performed. Has anyone connected the dots between the families, communities, and towns that have provided the Sunni volunteers for these new forces and the families, communities, and towns that are producing the Sunni militants? Hundreds of Americans and ironclad loyal Iraqis are needed for this task of vetting. Have the Pentagon and CIA deployed them? (A war-weary former colleague in the Agency laughed at me when I asked him this question.) We obviously already have significant problems with policemen, common soldiers, and senior officers working for the "other" side. As the insurrection has spread, so too the odds that the individuals we are training are related to the individuals they will be expected to kill. Many of these recruits also probably have a heightened Sunni religious identity. Are these young men supposed to begin a family-cum-Sunni blood feud? For the benefit of a Shiite-led democracy where the Kurds—the Kurds!—may well end up having more influence and wealth than the Arab Sunnis?

In the past, Iraqis of different ethnicities and creeds worked and fought together against common foes. Marriage and profound friendships among Iraq's various peoples are quite common. Revenge killings are rare. The Iraqi nationality, at least among the Arab Sunnis and Arab Shiites, is strong. So why do we want to put so much pressure so soon on possible fracture lines in Iraqi society? Particularly given the signals the United States has been sending since Falluja: a receding interest in putting American soldiers aggressively into harm's way and an increasing interest in doing the opposite with Sunni Iraqis? It's very likely that the more we try to Iraqify the military and police operations in the Sunni triangle, the worse the insurrection will become.

It's very likely that the more we try to Iraqify the military and police operations in the Sunni triangle, the worse the insurrection will become.

What we see as an astute, sensitive, long-term strategy to enlist the locals, our Iraqi enemies and friends will see as further proof that we are unwilling to start a true counterinsurgency campaign. We could quickly confront a potentially paralyzing situation. If it becomes apparent to all that the Iraqification option isn't going to work in the Sunni heartland, it may be nonetheless enormously difficult for Prime Minister Allawi to abandon the idea. He has staked his career on his ability to corral the Sunni insurrection. If he cannot do so except through repeated American frontal assaults against Sunni neighborhoods, towns, and cities, he may find himself at odds with the Sunni ex-Baathists who have always made up his inner circle. Allawi may be prepared to do this. The recent, apparently successful attack on Samarra gives one hope. Then again, he could buckle and oppose the necessary American military actions.

Time is critical now. Secretary Rumsfeld may be right that elections in "three-quarters or four-fifths of the country" are better than no elections at all in January. Any significant delay of elections would quickly force Grand Ayatollah Ali Sistani, Iraq's preeminent Shiite cleric, to stand against the United States. If he were to do so, he would win, we and Prime Minister Allawi would lose, and the chance for a nationwide insurrection would skyrocket. But it will be much better for us all if elections happen everywhere, more or less at the same time.

The U.S. embassy in Baghdad really has no good idea of how many Arab Sunnis are willing to support a new democratic Iraq, which inevitably will be Shiite-dominated. (This same problem is directly connected to the U.S. military's and the CIA's inability to get a clear picture of the insurrectionists, their number, coordination, and command structure.) In all probability, Sistani's objections to a prewar agreement among opposition groups, which gave the Shia approximately 55 percent of Iraq's population, will not go away. Indeed, they are likely to grow as we get closer to serious politics that will determine the future of the country. Sistani may well play hardball because he is the spiritual father of his hitherto always-cheated flock. He also truly believes in one-man, one-vote democracy. And he has Moktada al-Sadr and the young rabble-rousing cleric's followers still waiting in the wings. Odds are good that Sadr will quickly take the streets and the limelight the moment the Shia feel they are being cheated (Sadr may well storm back in any case before the elections). Sistani cannot allow Sadr to steal more of his authority among young Shiite men. The Bush administration certainly appears to understand the need to keep the election date. It may be very difficult for the administration to admit that its present course in Sunni Iraq is awry, but it does understand that elections are necessary to improve the dynamics in the country. Washington certainly knows that it doesn't want to collide with Sistani again.

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The administration and the country would certainly be better off if the Kerry campaign and the Democratic party would outflank the White House from the right on Iraq—to attack the NSC, the Pentagon, and the State Department for their lack of aggressiveness, for the continuing "Falluja syndrome" that still undermines operations in the Sunni triangle. But confronted with essentially a Howard Dean/Edward Kennedy critique—the second Gulf War was a mistake (as was the first), conceived through intelligence incompetence or manipulation, and destined to be a sandy Indochina—the administration will surely be less inclined to judge itself harshly. It seems unlikely that this left-wing stratagem will work in November, if for no other reason than that 1,000-plus combat deaths are too few, even with the media daily pounding George Bush with bad news from the Middle East, for Americans to dump the president and his patriotic call to stand our ground. But the Kerry-Holbrooke assessment will likely define the Democratic party's response to Iraq even after a defeat of the senator in November, further diminishing the necessary pressure on the Bush administration to undertake the ugly counterinsurgency campaign it's been avoiding.

The administration may enjoy more maneuvering room in Iraq than most of its critics believe: The Kurds and the vast majority of the Arab Iraqi Shia have not, and likely will not, go into rebellion against the Allawi government owing to events in the Sunni triangle. (Better numerous American failures than a Shia assumption of responsibility for quieting the Sunni hard-core.) And the Bush administration and Allawi are in some places making progress. Not without justification, they grouse that the press, (understandably) intimidated by the violence in Baghdad and on the highways, is no longer capable of reporting the good news of the counterinsurgency, in places like Samarra and Ramadi, where American and Iraqi efforts have, so far, kept the towns from becoming new Fallujas. This may not be great news—given the hatred of Saddam Hussein, his Tikriti clan, and the Baath party among Samarra's rather bourgeois tribal elders, one would hope to do better than a seesawing victory in what was one of the more pro-American Sunni Arab towns in April 2003. But such "progress" means the insurgency doesn't yet have decisive popular support. The Sunni triangle, let alone Iraq, is not yet Vietnam.

The Bush administration's plan of action is obviously a work in progress, which is as it should be. As the president stated in Thursday's foreign policy debate, he and his administration have and will again adapt to circumstances in Iraq. Events dictate strategy (not a strong theme in the State Department's much-touted and little-read treatise on post-Saddam Iraq), and it's entirely possible that the administration's "gradualist" approach will be jettisoned if insurgents continue to increase the tempo of violence, or if the White House decides it must make a serious try to pacify the Sunni triangle before the first round of national elections in January 2005.

Yet the odds of a massive November surprise offensive, after the U.S. elections, aren't high given how thinly spread American combat forces are across the country. Also, Secretary Rumsfeld's remark about partial elections may indicate that the secretary, who has consistently looked askance at deploying more troops, has little intention of adopting counterinsurgency tactics requiring a lot more manpower (for example, simultaneous or even sequential house-to-house offensives in Falluja, Ramadi, Baquba, Mosul, or the worst sections of Baghdad). The president could order thousands of Marines from East Asia and the United States to Iraq fairly quickly. But such an offensive in November or December would be essentially an all-American affair: Even the most expedited deployment of Iraq's new, American-made army would likely be too late for an all-out assault in 2004.

In any case, we should plan on the worst: The Sunni triangle will probably become much more savage, and Moktada al-Sadr may well again come at us and Grand Ayatollah Sistani, his primary foe, when we are stressed by battles with Sunnis. We should assume, as Senator Biden fearfully predicted, that we will inherit the wind in Iraq, and we should meet that wind head on. The president should transport all the Marines he can to Iraq, and then take and hold the centers of the Sunni insurrection, starting with Falluja. The administration shouldn't fear the Arabic satellite TV networks' broadcasting the horrors of the American offensive. Bin Ladenism grew by preaching the gospel of American weakness, not strength. The Ottoman empire, the greatest of Islam's holy-warrior states, attracted vastly more jihadists from its realms and beyond when it had Europe's Christian kingdoms on the run. If the Americans win—and win we will—these TV networks will not be able to camouflage defeat.

But we first have to recover lost ground. Falluja was a serious defeat for the United States. Prime Minister Allawi and his Iraqi soldiers cannot now ride to the rescue. A resurrected and reformed Sunni Baathist army never could. Iraq's Arab Sunni community must have the opportunity to participate electorally in the future of the country. It is possible they will choose to drive right over the cliff. A centuries-old habit of power is a hard thing to let go of. But if they choose not to free themselves from old ways, then they will have only themselves to blame. The United States can then begin what it should have done from the beginning: slowly constructing a new Iraqi army primarily with Arab Shiites and Kurds—the foundation of Iraq's future democracy. ♦

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The Myth of the War Room

The importance of a rapid response has been wildly exaggerated

By Noemie Emery

When Democrats dream of the perfect presidential campaign, they dream of the war room—the magic rapid-response operation that with its targeted rage and its lethal objections turns every Republican attack back on the attackers. If only Democrats were quicker, they say; if only they were nastier; if only they were . . . well, meaner than they are in real life.

In a mood of nostalgia, the website of the *American Prospect* recently looked back on a *Frontline* interview with George Stephanopoulos in 2001 when he recalled the legendary war room of the 1992 Clinton campaign. "What [were] you trying to do?" *Frontline* asked him. "Not to be the Dukakis campaign," Stephanopoulos answered. "A lot of us felt we had been beat because the Republicans had laid out a pretty targeted, fierce assault . . . that we didn't answer. . . . They'd see that we were different . . . because we fight back when we're hit." The idea here is that it is "fighting back" that is crucial, that lashing back fast is the key to survival, which isn't quite true. It's not the counterattack, but its character, that turns out to matter: It's not enough to assault the attacker; the charge itself must be confronted and nullified. Unless this happens, the counterattack can be counterproductive. As John Kerry is finding out now.

The urban legend now in the making is that if Kerry joins Dukakis in the Democrats' line of magnificent losers, it will be because he did not strike back hard enough or quickly enough when he was attacked twice in August—first on his war and postwar activities by the Swift Boat Veterans for Truth and then for his confusing stances on current events by a horde of Republicans at their convention. Actually, this gives him too much, and too little, credit: He was nasty enough, both with Bush and the Swifties. He wasn't, however, terribly clever, as each ploy that he tried came equipped with a problem that quickly recoiled in his face.

His first move against the Swifties was to deploy his lawyers and threaten to sue them into submission, trying to scare broadcasters into not running their ads and booksellers into not stocking their book. The problem with this was that it seemed like attempted suppression of speech. His second move was to attack President Bush for not demanding that the ads be pulled. The problem with this was that Bush didn't control the Swift boat vets; he stood in relation to them just as Kerry did to the many more numerous and much better-funded independent 527 groups on the liberal side, which have spent about $60 million to vilify Bush. When Bush said that *all* 527s should be suspended, Kerry refused to join him, and therefore looked petulant—demanding that ads that hurt him be pulled, while leaving his friends free to shower abuse on his rival.

The third thing he did was allow his campaign to shower abuse on the veterans who opposed him, denouncing them as sleazeballs and liars. The problem with this was that Kerry's campaign was rooted in the claim that he as a veteran had unique moral authority, while his friends and backers trashed hundreds of other vets, many of whom had more medals than Kerry did, some of whom had been wounded more gravely, and most of whom had served much longer tours. If Kerry had had the nerve and the skill of the real JFK, he might have done what Kennedy did in 1960 when he met the Protestant ministers nervous about his Catholicism in an open assembly, taking their questions and assuaging their doubts. Kerry might have held a mega-press conference, putting all of the facts (and all of his records) in the open, inviting questions on all of the charges, and possibly inviting the Swifties themselves. Instead, Kerry has never confronted the Swifties directly, never released all of his journals or

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Reuters / Jim Young

records, and, since the ads appeared, has never taken questions from the press corps that follows him. In his six-week tailspin, Kerry has given the impression of being a bully (in trying to frighten the bookstores and publisher), of being a whiner (in complaining to Bush), of being a wimp (in insisting that only ads that hurt him should be suspended), and of being a hypocrite, in claiming for himself a protected status as a veteran that he is unwilling to extend to anyone else. Democrats claim it was the Swifties' attacks that hurt Kerry, but his own responses were just as damaging. Observers saw a man who was thin-skinned, vain, whining, and panicked, and did not seem to like what they noticed. Kerry's numbers were slipping when the Swifties attacked him, but what really made his numbers fall was his response.

Along with the belief that any response is effective in itself goes the belief that all charges can be refuted, or that a forceful denial can automatically make a charge go away. In reality, an attack can be denied or refuted effectively only if the original attack is either false or out of keeping with what people know about the character or acts of the candidate. The 1988 attack on Dukakis—that he was soft on crime, as shown by his support of a prison furlough program through which a murderer sentenced to life without parole was released to assault and rape a young couple—was devastating because it was true. In 1976, when the Massachusetts legislature passed a measure to deny furloughs to convicted murderers, Dukakis as governor had vetoed it. From his refusal to admit error, change the law, or apologize to the victims, to his bloodless reaction to a hypothetical question in the first presidential debate about how he would respond to a crime of violence against his own wife, Dukakis himself drove home the (accurate) message that he was in fact a classically out-of-touch liberal who thought criminals were victims in need of rehabilitation, while real victims deserved no response.

By the same token, the main charge made against Kerry by the Bush campaign—that he is a "flip-flopper" who moves as the wind blows, usually for reasons of political interest—has its roots plainly planted in fact. His statements on Iraq have a whirligig quality, and, laid end to end, cover the entire spectrum. There is no stance on the war Kerry has not at one time taken. When an opponent makes a campaign ad wholly or largely consisting of a candidate's own acts or statements, that campaign is in trouble—the kind that cannot readily be spun.

The same is true of the case against Kerry the Swifties have made. Some of their initial charges—how Kerry got his wounds, from whom he got them—were contested and inconclusive. But the deeper accusation of the Swifties, which is harder to reply to, is their belief that he was and is a narcissistic careerist, who came to Vietnam with his typewriter and camera, got an early release, and then went home to join the antiwar movement and build a political career on their backs. Their more damaging complaint is not that Kerry was not brave (he was), but that he is an opportunist who decides critical life and death issues on the basis of what serves his career.

This is a common theme among Kerry observers, and consistent across the span of his career. Kerry was for and against the war in Vietnam, as he is for and against the war in Iraq, as he believes at the same time that life starts at conception and that no form of abortion can be too extreme. Kerry enlisted in the Navy at a time when the war was considered respectable, and turned against the war when that cause became trendy; he voted for the war in Iraq when polls showed it popular; and voted against funding it when facing Howard Dean in the primaries; bragged all his Senate career about his ardent support for abortion, but discovered his inner pro-lifer when political-

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ly expedient. The famed war room of the 1992 campaign (with an invaluable assist from the candidate's wife) fended off Clinton's bimbo eruptions in the main by convincing people that the issue had no connection to governance, and that voters should dismiss it as irrelevant. This is not even arguable with the attacks on Dukakis and Kerry, which go straight to the heart of their governing character, and take force from their own words and deeds.

Just as there are some attacks that cannot be successfully countered, there are some counterattacks that are better not launched. It must have seemed to Kerry's people, and probably to Kerry himself, that the symmetrical counter to the Swifties' assault on his war and postwar record was the record of George W. Bush in the Texas Air National Guard. But if the two issues appeared as rough equivalents, this was not true of the damage they were capable of inflicting on each man's campaign. Kerry's war record *was* his campaign; most voters never knew, or had forgotten, about his postwar activities. And outside of Washington and Massachusetts, the fact that Kerry was loathed by so many of his peers and contemporaries came as news. By contrast, Bush's National Guard record had been thoroughly vetted; he had never run on his war record, and his irresponsibility as a young man, as opposed to his post-40 redemption, was a story he told on himself. At worst, the "revelation" that he perhaps had been careless at the end of five years of otherwise respectable service would not have surprised many people. And this was before the Rathergate scandal emerged.

The Democrats planned to capitalize on the now-notorious Dan Rather *60 Minutes* "scoop" of September 8, and prepared a film, "Fortunate Son," that carried on the charges of dereliction of duty made in the program, and even incorporated footage from the show (although not of the phony memos that had been used to document the accusations). But they kept the film up for days after it had become clear that the entire Guard issue was tainted and toxic, that Rather's claims had been based on obvious forgeries, and that the controversial name at the heart of the scandal had become Rather and not Bush. Today, anyone thinking "Texas Air National Guard" is likely to think not of George W. Bush 31 years ago, but of the Kerry campaign and its friends at CBS News. And it is worth underlining that the attack backfired even though the Bush campaign itself was neither rapid nor ruthless in its response to the original charges.

The Kerry campaign is so enamored of the rapid response that it is given to attacking by reflex, even when the response is doomed to be counterproductive or so dissonant that it makes people wince. Within hours, Democrats attacked a Bush ad that showed Kerry windsurfing in shorts, a response that made Kerry look humorless and petulant, and drew further attention to the ad. What was their complaint? "People do not want to see lighthearted advertising" in wartime, scolded Kerry spokesman Mike McCurry. Minutes after Bush finished his acceptance speech at the Republican convention in August, Kerry appeared around midnight in Springfield, Ohio, to attack Bush and Cheney. When Bush had barely finished his address to the United Nations General Assembly, Kerry attacked that, and when the Iraqi interim prime minister, Ayad Allawi, addressed Congress late last month, the Kerry campaign wasted not a moment before attacking him. "The last thing you want to be seen as is a puppet of the United States," said war-room maven and new Kerry spokesman Joe Lockhart. Actually, the last thing you want to be seen as is a clueless jerk who thinks the exigencies of the campaign war room more important than the respect owed an ally in a real war. Democratic senator Joe Biden had to rapidly respond to Kerry's rapid response team, assuring Allawi personally that under a Kerry administration he "would continue to have the full support of the United States of America in order to be able to establish a representative republic" in Iraq. "The rapid response, war room mentality has its virtues," noted the *Powerline* blog. "But they do not trump the imperative that a presidential candidate appear statesmanlike or at least generally supportive of the nation's objectives. . . . You can't . . . barge into the batter's box when it's the other guy's turn to hit."

Master politicians such as Roosevelt, Kennedy, and Reagan were tough, but they could also inspire, and none ever pulled stunts such as these. They were too self-protective, as well as too sensible: Since Kerry took up his pugnacious persona, his ratings have dropped like a rock. None of this seems likely to deter other Democrats, who, believing as they do that Republicans only win by mud-slinging, will want to sling more mud themselves.

As Kerry started his slide, cable news talking head Susan Estrich, a one-time adviser to Michael Dukakis, flipped out in an infamous column, urging her friends to run ads claiming a younger George Bush once helped a girlfriend to get an abortion, and calling Vice President Cheney a dangerous drunk. "Could Dick Cheney get a license to drive a school bus with his record?" she asked. Americans would no doubt have hired Dukakis to drive a bus anywhere, but when it comes to a matter of driving the country, they want someone a touch more hardheaded. The war-room obsession has serious drawbacks. It helps to be tough, and to press your case strongly. But first, you need something to say. ♦

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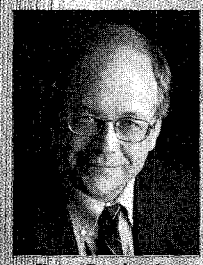

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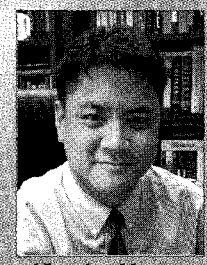

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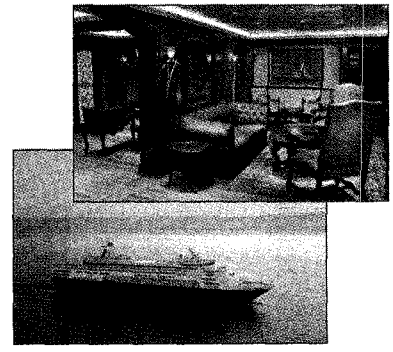

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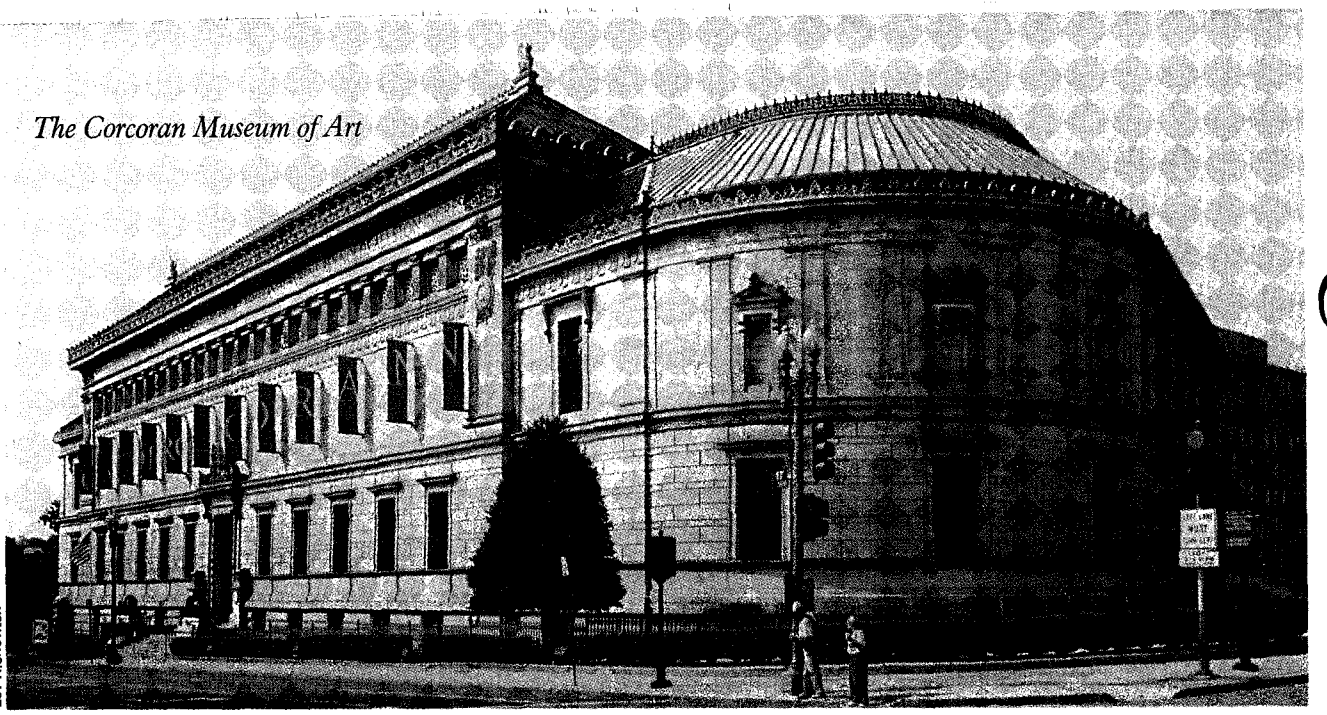

The Corcoran Museum of Art

Lev Nisnevitch

Malling Washington

The new Indian museum adds to the cacophony

By Catesby Leigh

It is a sight to make L'Enfant's jaw drop: a great pile of buff limestone, like a mesa promontory somewhere in the desert. The walls undulate as the mass tapers towards the east—with large, glazed cavities and overhangs on one side, a main entrance overhang facing the Capitol, and a low, stepped saucer dome on top. Welcome to the National Museum of the American Indian—the newest museum to appear on the Mall.

With the advent of the Indian museum, the Mall is complete, according to the planners. Time will tell, but the fact remains that the major buildings built in and around this precinct over the last half century offer sad comparisons with their older neighbors.

Any number of Mall vistas testify to the chasm World War II marks in the nation's architectural history. The West and East Buildings of the National Gallery of Art—completed in 1941 and 1978—offer the best-known example: a stark contrast between two different ideas of what architecture is. But visitors can see such contrasts up and down the Mall. Take, for instance, the first of the Mall's postwar museums, the National Museum of American History. Designed by Walker O. Cain and completed in 1964, it faces an ensemble of federal offices designed by Arthur Brown Jr. and completed three decades before.

From American History's elevated terrace, reached by a pair of long exterior stairways rising from Constitution Avenue, you stare out at Brown's magnificent second-story porch. Its Roman Doric columns, entablature, and pediment crown Brown's Andrew W. Mellon Auditorium. Below, the auditorium boasts three handsome portals crowned by carved masks. Recessed colonnades flank the auditorium and link it to office blocks terminated at both ends by pediments containing allegorical groups, as the central pediment does.

Then you stare up at the façade of Cain's museum. Can these buildings really be just three decades apart? What cataclysm intervened? Generous decoration has given way to a lifeless geometric rationalism. American History is a long box containing two stories of exhibition space above the terrace. Two low, rectilinear attics are stacked on top. A cornice, pitched at roughly forty-five degrees, offers very scant relief from the tyranny of right angles. The American History museum is a steel-framed building clad in Tennessee marble, but the stone is laid not in blocks suggesting mass in compression, as with traditional buildings, but rather in large, vertically oblong panels that suggest a thin screen. Narrow window-strips separate the recessed masonry screens from the rest of Cain's curtain walls, heightening the impression of flimsiness.

Is the depressing contrast with Brown's ensemble simply a question of unequal talents? No, even though Cain was a minor architect. The key factor is that the designers of Brown's school benefited not only from a treasury of expressive resources but also from the "fail-safe" mechanisms that all but guaranteed at least satisfactory architectural results. The primary cause of Cain's failure must be sought in the dogma that took hold of architecture schools in the 1930s—a dogma that claimed architecture must reflect changes in the human condition wrought by modern science. It must

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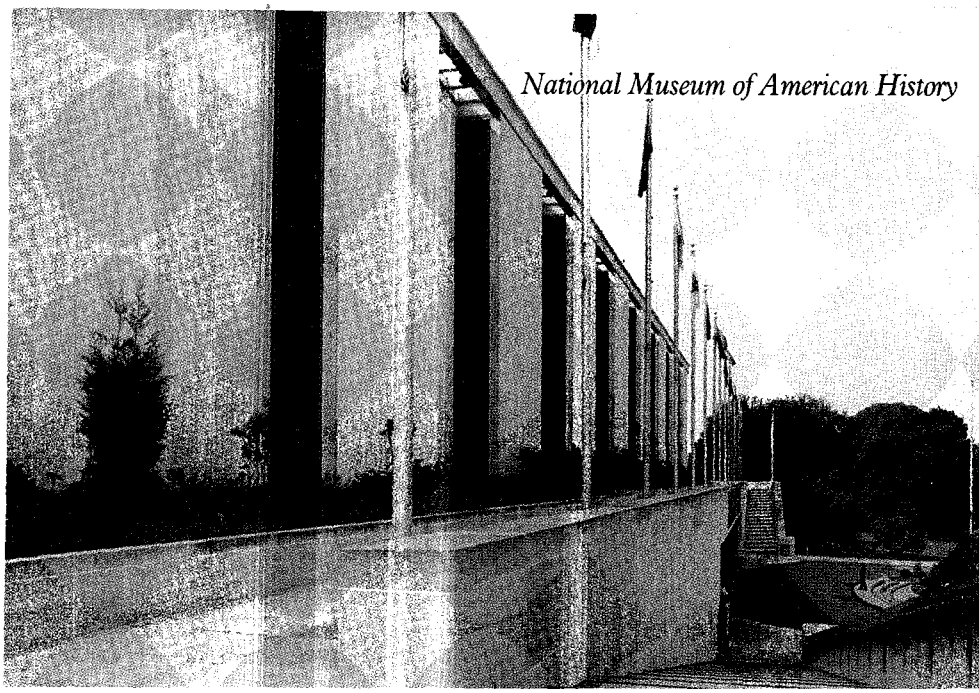

National Museum of American History

Lev Nisnevitch

speak of "progress" and "evolution" through abstraction and the absence of ornament; it must be "scientific" in expressing its structural properties, as Cain's flimsy curtain-walls do. But because modernism never shed its Romantic roots, such scientific dogma had to cohabit with the notion that buildings should enshrine novelty, as the expression of the designer's originality and creative prowess. This cult of originality has contributed to the stylistic instability of the Mall's modernist architecture.

The designers of the Mall's modernist museums have enjoyed varying degrees of success in replacing traditional means of expression with new ones. Some of them have unquestionably erected far more engaging buildings than Cain's. And yet, time and again, their work confronts us with fundamental deficiencies. For instance, the elementary gesture of endowing entry into a building with formal significance is almost entirely absent. Modernist entrances tend to be mere voids in a mass. How can such reductionism contribute to the dignity of the nation's premier civic precinct?

Or take the use of sculpture. Brown employed sculpture as an organic part of his design, but at American History, the sculpture is not integral. On its Mall terrace, we encounter a chrome form resembling an unraveling, sidewise figure eight mounted on a tall, slender, tapering plinth of black granite. Designed by José De Rivera and entitled *Infinity* (1967), this modestly scaled work was the first piece of abstract sculpture ever commissioned by the federal government. De Rivera's curves may strike a contrast with Cain's right angles, but they do not approach the level of formal interplay animating Brown's edifice. And the sheer blankness of American History's large exterior recesses deprives the building of visual power—a result of the rejection of the classical idea of the sculpturally active façade.

Blank façades are a widespread blight on the Mall and its environs. The National Air and Space Museum (1976), designed by Gyo Obata of Hellmuth, is about as minimal as American History. The difference is that on the Independence Avenue elevation, Obata obtained sharp contrasts of light and shade through the arrangement of his seven rectilinear volumes, which are clad in Tennessee marble in deference to John Russell Pope's West Building across the Mall. Four of these volumes, the major boxes, rise higher than the minor boxes. The entrance is stashed ignominiously in a glazed void beneath one of the latter. On the northern elevation, Obata replicated the four major boxes, but here, because of the lack of direct sunlight, they alternate with vast, recessed expanses of tinted glass enclosing large, sky-lit exhibition courts. The contrast of light and shade is lost, and seen from the Mall, the museum seems a hopelessly bulky, inert structure.

Across Seventh Street from Air and Space lies the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden (1974), designed by modernist pioneer Gordon Bunshaft. This is another Mall museum conceived in terms of rudimentary geometries—this time, the cylinder rather than the box—and it is situated behind a thick and forbidding wall of concrete with pebble aggregate. The Hirshhorn cylinder is perched on four stout piers that flare outward as they rise. The glass lobby, entered by way of rotating doors in bronze canisters, is snuggled between the two southern piers. The cylinder has a large circular void in its core, making room for a rather stark courtyard with an elevated and unornamented bronze pool, situated off-center, with water jets. Across Jefferson Drive, more unsightly walls of concrete with pebble aggregate enclose a sunken sculpture garden.

The Hirshhorn is commonly dubbed the "doughnut" or the "bunker." It might strike one as a great place to put a cyclotron, or its balcony overlooking the Mall might read as an observation deck on an alien spacecraft. At the same time, however, the cylinder is a reasonable form for this cross-axial site, which terminates across the Mall at Pope's National Archives building (1935). A cylindrical structure, in principle, could play nicely off the Archives' dominant rectilinear masses, aided by the fact that these two edifices, unlike many others along the Mall, are not screened by trees.

But the Hirshhorn suffers acutely by comparison with Pope's mausoleum, just as American History does by comparison with Brown's palatial ensemble. The National Archives building is a brilliant success in scenographic design; it communicates a sense of imposing scale and timeless grandeur that is thoroughly appropriate to the Mall. The Hirshhorn looks like an oddity.

There is more to the Mall's postwar museum architecture than modernist rationalism, of course. Postmodernism made its debut on the four-and-a-half-

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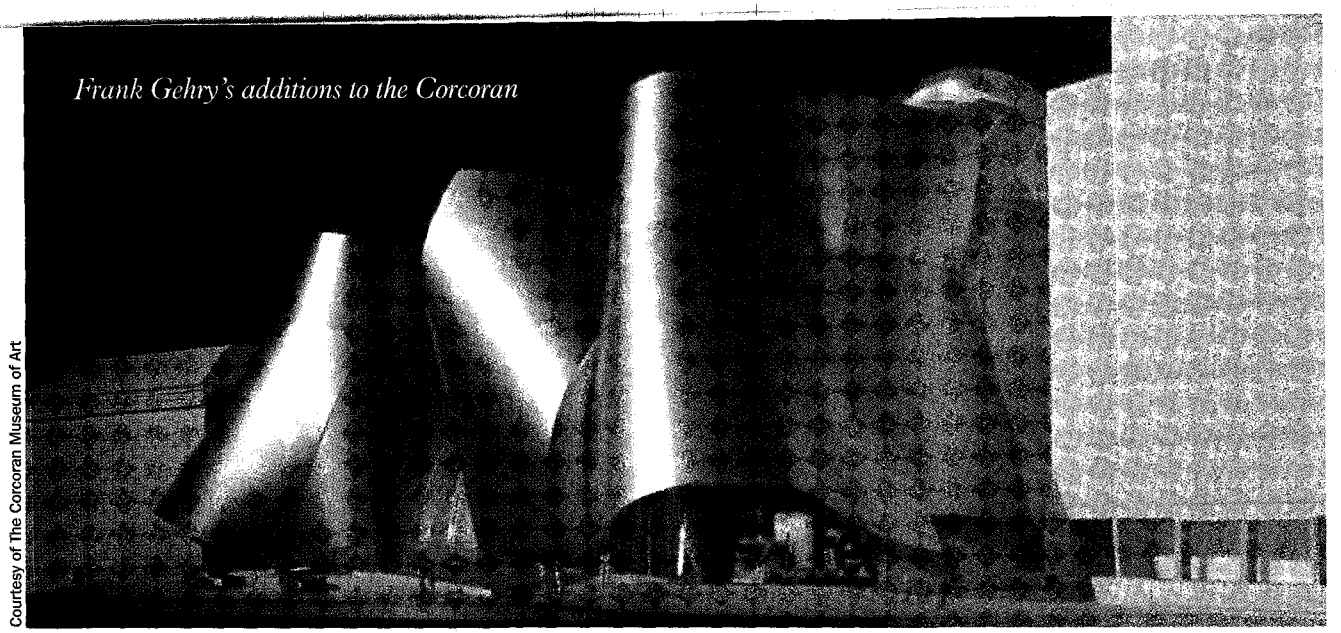

Frank Gehry's additions to the Corcoran

Courtesy of The Corcoran Museum of Art

acre site on the south side of the Smithsonian's Gothic "Castle," facing Independence Avenue. Jean Paul Carlhian's Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, devoted to Asian art, and the National Museum of African Art are one-story pavilions designed to defer in scale to the Castle as well as the Freer Gallery and the Arts and Industries Building. This means that the Sackler and African Art are largely subterranean enclaves. Each of the two museums has three underground levels, with the bulk of their gallery space located one floor below grade.

Apart from their modest scale, the pavilions were intended to be stylistically contextual—to harmonize with and enrich the stylistic stew of the three neighboring Smithsonian buildings. The Sackler, located next to the classical Freer and clad in gray granite, has six copper pyramids for a roof, while African Art, located by the Victorian-eclectic Arts and Industries, was built with pink granite and is crowned by six copper domes. Globe finials are perched between each building's roof structures, while ersatz-classical motifs have the vestigial character typical of postmodern design.

The most noteworthy postmodern building in Washington's monumental core—and one of the most noteworthy anywhere—is the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (1993) designed by James Ingo Freed. A shallow limestone volume with a protruding, semicircular screen faces Fourteenth Street just south of Independence Avenue. Diminutive Viennese Secession lamps crown the bulky piers at each end of the screen. Having passed through one of the voids in the screen, visitors enter the building by way of a little structure framed in gray bolted steel. Here begins Freed's death-camp décor.

Inside the museum, no dominating axis is evident. One enters the main court, the Hall of Witness, from the side, stepping onto a platform of treaded steel that is equipped with benches and a bewildering gray-metal contraption that serves as a sort of sculptural frame for the platform. Steps lead down from the platform to the floor of the hall. A glazed roof slants across the space, permitting views of pedestrian bridges above that allow visitors to cross from one building block to the other as they view the permanent exhibition. Metal-clad, hipped-roofed structures resembling watchtowers also loom picturesquely above. At the back of the hall is a stairway with rails at skewed angles. Few visitors will notice the hall is rectangular in plan.

On the museum's western front, a hexagonal limestone pavilion features crudely detailed blind doors and windows. Niches occur in the vertices' lower reaches, and together with the glazed corner-strips, protruding above, they jarringly disrupt the limestone façade, whose heavy cornices look like they've been sheared off at every turn. In a curious echo of the American History museum, the façade thus assumes the appearance of flimsy panels. Freed seems to be making two statements here: one concerning modern structural methods, and another concerning the precarious nature of civilized society. Both are of dubious artistic value. But the main problem with this pavilion is that the stark, severely geometric Hall of Remembrance it encloses is severely lacking in symbolic power. Encases in a black metal box, the Hall's eternal flame would be at home in a chemistry lab.

Within postmodernism's conceptual confines, there is a certain logic to Freed's attempt to evoke a world out of joint by means of an evocative décor and disordered perspectives. But resort to a décor based on explicitly exotic elements can *only* be a recipe for theme-park architecture. The Hall of Witness's scenographic setting is stage-set stuff.

Then we come to the contorted geometries employed by Frank Gehry, which have their roots in the deconstructionist movement of the 1980s and 1990s. Gehry's metallic heaps are the life of the postmodern party, even if they confuse architecture with abstract sculpture.

That's not a problem for Corcoran Gallery, which unveiled Gehry's design for an addition in 2001. (Groundbreaking is now scheduled for 2006.) This is one of a series of Gehry projects involving agglomerations of folds or strips that do not resolve into legible wholes—the same problem created by the inordinately complex geometries of I.M. Pei's National Gallery East Building.

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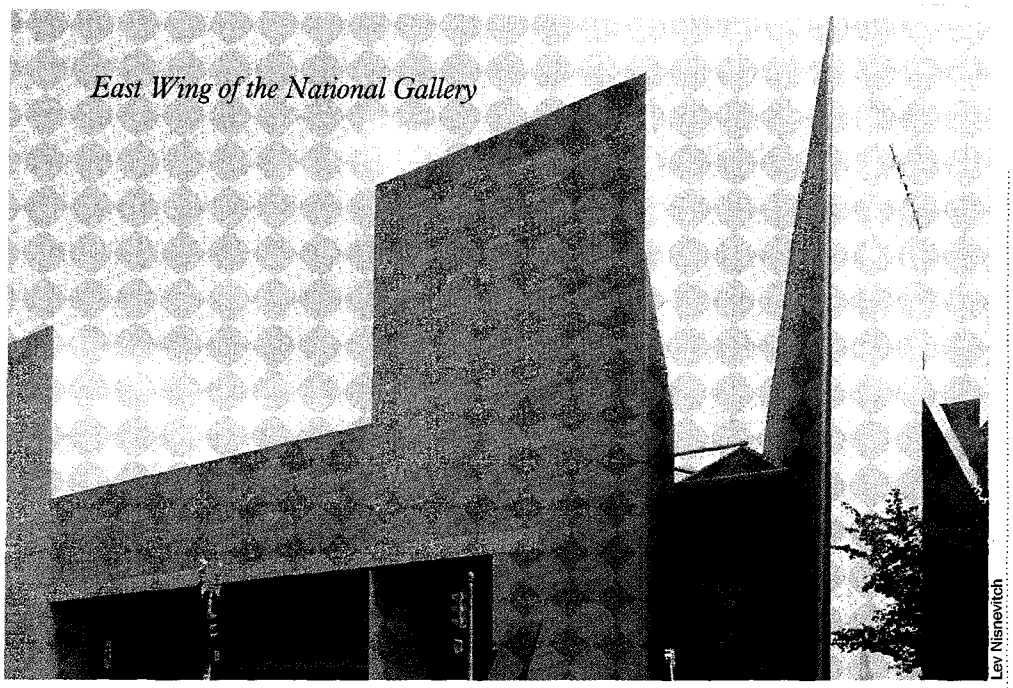
East Wing of the National Gallery

Lev Nisnevitch

Gehry envisions three great folds of stainless steel—he calls them "sails"—that billow outward along New York Avenue. A large expanse of glazing is tucked between two of the sails and contains the new main entrance to the Corcoran. The addition is crowned by a roof consisting of another stainless-steel fold, in this case an irregular conic section tilted upward towards the west, with skylights protruding from slits, and with more glazing stashed into interstices between the roof and the rest of the building. In approaching the main entrance, visitors will walk between huge, tilted skylights rising out of the sidewalk to each side.

The National Museum of the American Indian marks the debut on the Mall of the "organic," curvilinear Romanticism which springs from the pronouncement by William Kent, an eighteenth-century English landscape gardener, that "nature abhors a straight line." This notion has found its most memorable architectural expression—in an urban setting, at least—in Frank Lloyd Wright's Guggenheim Museum (1959) in Manhattan.

The Indian museum makes more impact outside than inside, though its major interior spaces abhor straight lines quite as much as the exterior does. However, design changes after the firing of the original architect, Douglas Cardinal, in a contractual dispute, have diluted the exterior's picturesque effect.

Cardinal, a Canadian of Blackfoot and métis ancestry, has called the museum as built a "forgery." Nevertheless, the theme-park element was part of the project from the beginning, and it was not confined to the mesa-promontory architecture. In the surrounding landscape we thus encounter an encapsulation of the Washington region's habitat.

A waterfall rolls down a rock formation extending from the building's northwestern elevation, facing the principal point of access from the Mall. It refers to the falls up the Potomac, while the stream that meanders alongside the building recalls the Mall's vanished Tiber Creek. A swampy patch at the east end of the site likewise harkens back to the Mall primeval, while a little grove of trees stands for the forests of the Virginia Piedmont. A "meadow" and plots of corn and other indigenous crops are found on the Maryland Avenue side.

Inside, a huge space rises under the dome, with a circular court below. A low sculptural wall of copper strips swirls about the court; curving walls, stairways, and overlooks loom above. Despite the curves, the space is overlarge, unanimated, and badly detailed. Curiously, a solar panel of stone at the center of the court doesn't align with the metal-framed glass oculus in the dome. And the court's blank expanses of skin-coat plaster need to be covered with textiles.

Wright's Guggenheim is an idiosyncratic and expressionistic building, but hardly a beautiful one. It marks the culmination of his Romantic quest for an organic architecture to which the form of nature's supreme organism, man, was irrelevant. It is thus another benchmark in the dehumanization of art. The Indian museum shares this pedigree, though it is eminently doubtful that it will achieve the Guggenheim's iconic status. What distinguishes the two is that Wright focused on abstract form, not sentimental associations.

Finally, we can look forward to a glass-box revival across Pennsylvania Avenue from Pope's West Building. The Newseum, for which ground was broken late in 2003, is an agglomeration of boxes, three aligned with the avenue, and a fourth box, to contain condominiums, pitched at a skewed angle to align with C Street.

The three Newseum boxes will rise in height as they recede from the avenue, each having its own degree of transparency. A large stone tablet etched with the First Amendment will be tacked onto the outer box. This volume will also boast a 4,500-square-foot "window" offering pedestrians a view of a huge media screen and news zipper in the Newseum's ninety-foot-high atrium, situated in the middle box. The three glazed boxes, which rise in height from front to back, are conceived as "three rectangular 'bars'—a three-dimensional newspaper," according to architect James Stewart Polshek, while all the glazing, of course, stands for "openness."

Why is the idea of a masonry building anthropomorphically massed and detailed to evoke the majesty and endurance of one of our fundamental liberties out of the question? Best not to ask. We've gone from "the world as cosmos" embodied by classicism's harmonious geometries to "the world as nature" evoked by the Gothic's arboreal profiles, to the Newseum's glitzy, disembodied "world as breaking news." This is progress?

Erected during a relatively brief time span, the Mall's postwar museum buildings offer eloquent testimony to modernism's fundamental stylistic instability. To be sure, a confusion of

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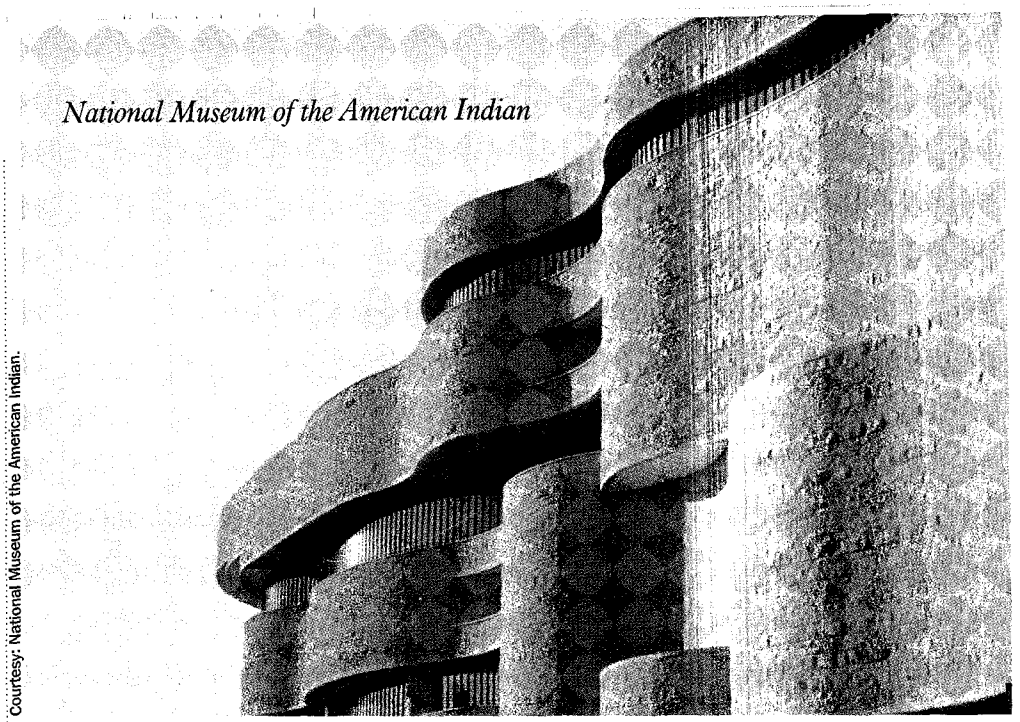
tongues has long been on display thanks to the Freer, the Castle, and the modernized-Romanesque-cum-Gothic hodgepodge of the Arts and Industries building. But the Freer and the Castle in particular relate to instinctive modes of perception and the human scale—and thus to deeply ingrained preferences—in a way Pei's East Building, for example, doesn't.

In the architecture and decoration of the western tradition, art is clearly understood in terms of the mastery of the human form as revealed through the painter or sculptor's representation of the same or the architect's arrangement, by analogy with the composition of the human body, of his subordinate volumes and spaces in relation to the whole. When the designer concerns himself with novelty and the negation of tradition, technique too easily gets the upper hand over art. And the criticism that advocates such pyrotechnics is, in all too many cases, sheer sophistry—an empty game of tagging architecture with irrelevant political, sociological, or psychological concepts.

At the same time, classical architecture's social, psychological, and even spiritual role of connecting us with civilization's immemorial past, of making that past a meaningful presence in our daily lives, is simply lost on modernist pundits whose emotional—not to mention historical—horizons so often appear pathetically constricted.

Sure, Frank Gehry's architecture intrigues people, and there's plenty of room in the world for it. But it's a mistake to tack his histrionics onto Ernest Flagg's Corcoran (1897), whose grandeur is owed to an entirely different, much more ancient, and much more profound conception of creative endeavor—a conception that also happens to be much more at home with the historic identity of Washington's monumental core.

While interiors in some of the Mall's modernist museums are functionally sound (Air and Space) or visually stimulating (the Hall of Witness in the Holocaust Museum), the exteriors of these buildings are collectively unsuited to successful urbanism.



National Museum of the American Indian

Courtesy: National Museum of the American Indian.

They remind us that the elimination of the traditional façade has been a disaster.

A classical architect thinking more about the appearance of Independence Avenue and less about the Air and Space Museum's structural frame would have designed something very different from Obata's boxes. Similarly, Claude-Nicolas Ledoux's La Villette Customs Station (1789) in Paris, with its crowning cylinder punched out with an arcade and perched on a pedimented base, might have provided better inspiration for the Hirshhorn than a mere geometric form. And one wonders whether Freed's 14th Street façade really establishes any meaningful relationship to the Holocaust by reducing the classical idiom to rigid geometries. A severe Doric front could have asserted the grave, noncelebratory intent of his building more effectively. And a classical Hall of Remembrance pavilion could have had more aesthetic and emotional resonance, both inside and outside, than his hexagon. The Newseum will be a huge draw, but glass-box architecture is not suitable to a monumental setting. Like today's newspaper, it is ephemeral. It does not age. It simply deteriorates.

The postwar museums have reinforced the Mall's status as the heart of a city-within-the-city that empties out at nightfall. Indeed, the admirer of Arthur Brown's Constitution Avenue ensemble might have cause to regret the planning that put it there. The Smithsonian's underground museum complex, which anticipated the dreadful subterranean visitor center now under construction at the Capitol, is a reminder of the institutional surfeit that has long bedeviled this area. To thrive as the center of a great capital, Washington's monumental core needs a finer-grain, mixed-use urbanism. New buildings on the Mall may even be in order.

The future architecture of monumental Washington should reflect not only the lessons offered by the Mall's postwar museums, but modernism's cumulative impact on America's built environment. Urban designer Andrés Duany recently suggested that there are between three hundred and three thousand modernist masterpieces. "The problem," he added, "is the thirty million failures of modernism that have destroyed our cities and our landscapes."

Modernism's win/loss ratio on the Mall has been better than in the nation as a whole, but it has nevertheless been unacceptably low. Banning modernism is not the issue. The point is rather that the burden of proof—on the Mall and elsewhere—should be on modernism rather than tradition. Tradition should be the default option. And, unlikely though it might seem, the winds will shift in precisely that direction in the coming decades. ♦

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The Classic

Trying one more time to put A.J. Liebling in the canon.

By Terry Teachout

Sometimes I wonder whether those who subscribed to the *New Yorker* in its halcyon days, the 1930s and 1940s, complained as much about it as their children and grandchildren do. Probably not—it wasn't an institution then, just a magazine. Yet there were already those who bristled at its way of looking at the world. In 1947, for example, Robert Warshow wrote a withering essay for *Partisan Review* about *The Wild Flag*, a collection of E.B. White's pollyannish *New Yorker* editorials on world government.

In the process Warshow contrived to pepper the whole magazine with hot shot: "The *New Yorker* has always dealt with experience not by trying to understand it but by prescribing the attitude to be adopted toward it. This makes it possible to feel intelligent without thinking, and it is a way of making everything tolerable, for the assumption of a suitable attitude toward experience can give one the illusion of having dealt with it adequately. . . . History may kill you, it is true, but you have taken the right attitude, you will have been intelligent and humane and suitably melancholy to the end."

Warshow was a man on whom little was lost, and his complaint, though it rings truer now than it did then, nonetheless had a certain validity in the old days. Once you got past White's introductory "Notes and Comment," though, I can't see that there was really all that much worth griping about. Under Harold Ross, the *New Yorker* boasted a team of in-house writers who were nothing if not individual in style and approach. Most of their names are forgotten today save by connoisseurs of American journalism, but anyone who leafs through a random issue of the *New Yorker* from Ross's later years is likely to want to read much more of such half-remembered *New Yorker* standbys as Wolcott Gibbs, Philip Hamburger, St. Clair McKelway, and Berton Roueché.

Just Enough Liebling
Classic Work by the Legendary New Yorker *Writer*
by A.J. Liebling
North Point, 534 pp., $27.50

Between Meals
An Appetite for Paris
by A.J. Liebling
North Point, 167 pp., $13

The Sweet Science
by A.J. Liebling
North Point, 267 pp., $15

As for the magazine's better-known outside contributors, I can only boggle at the thought that it published the wildly dissimilar likes of John Cheever, H.L. Mencken, Vladimir Nabokov, John O'Hara, S.J. Perelman, J.D. Salinger, Rebecca West, and Edmund Wilson on a regular basis. It may well be that the *New Yorker*'s short stories were cut too closely to measure, as its critics always claimed, but when you consider the magazine as a whole, you have to ask yourself: Has any editor put together so *varied* a group of authors?

The two writers most closely identified with the *New Yorker* under Ross are White and James Thurber. But much of their work has aged poorly (though Thurber's cartoons remain perennially fresh), and a growing share of critical attention is now being paid to a pair of slightly junior staffers. Joseph Mitchell was duly honored with the publication in 1992 of *Up in the Old Hotel*, a hefty collection of his *New Yorker* pieces that introduced the author of *McSorley's Wonderful Saloon* to a new generation of readers. Now it's A.J. Liebling's turn—or should be. The new volume *Just Enough Liebling* is clearly intended to do for him what *Up in the Old Hotel* did for Mitchell. He deserves it, but whether this book will turn the trick is a different story.

Though Liebling and Mitchell were close friends whose subject matter not infrequently overlapped, their styles were entirely dissimilar. Mitchell wrote about New York's "low life"—saloonkeepers, bearded ladies, Iroquois ironworkers—in a tone of quiet amusement often touched with an elegiac note. Liebling's prose, by contrast, was an exuberant, extroverted alloy of uptown and downtown, more or less what Mencken might have sounded like had he stuck to reporting instead of switching to the editorial page. Long experience as a feature writer for newspapers had taught him how to write concise, eye-grabbing leads, and when Ross gave him enough elbow room to paint full-length portraits of his subjects, he made the most of every inch. Here is his description of John Baptiste Fournet, former Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Louisiana and a minor player in Liebling's masterpiece, *The Earl of Louisiana* (1961), a book-length profile of Earl Long, Huey's no less flamboyant younger brother:

> At sixty-four the Chief Justice, the Honorable John Baptiste Fournet, is still a formidable figure of a man—tall and powerful and presenting what might be considered in another state the outward appearance of a highly successful bookmaker. The suit he had on when I saw him, of rich, snuff-colored silk, was cut with the virtuosity that only subtropical tailors expend on hot-weather clothing. Summer clothes in the North are makeshifts, like seasonal slipcovers on furniture, and look it. The Chief Justice wore a diamond the size of a Colossal ripe olive on the ring finger of his left

Terry Teachout is the drama critic of the Wall Street Journal *and the music critic of* Commentary. *His latest book,* All in the Dances: A Brief Life of George Balanchine, *will be published in November by Harcourt.*

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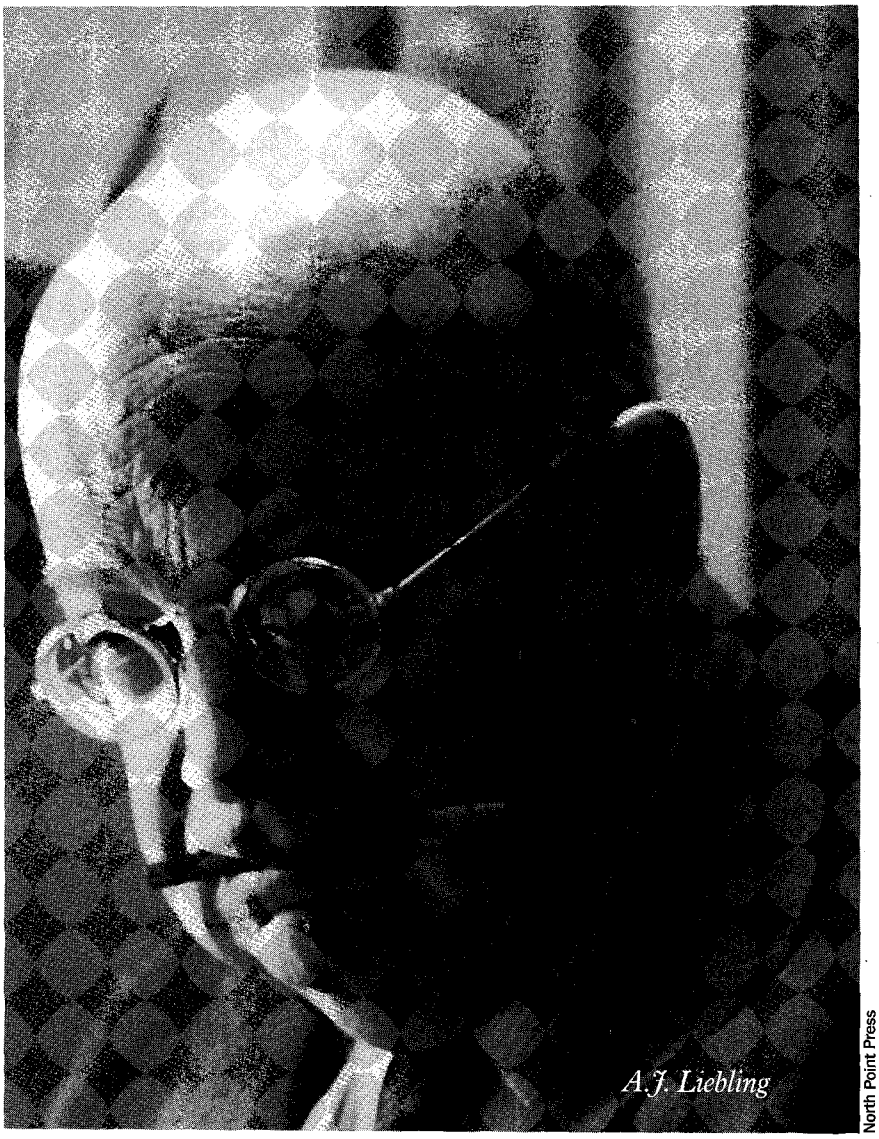
hand and a triangle of flat diamonds as big as a trowel in his tie. His manner was imbued with a gracious warmth not commonly associated with the judiciary, and his voice reflected at a distance of three centuries the France from which his ancestors had migrated, although he pronounces his name "Fournett." (The pronunciation of French proper names in Louisiana would make a good monograph. There was, for example, a state senator named DeBlieux who was called simply "W.")

All of Liebling is in that show-stopping description: the weakness for rogues, the razor-sharp eye for detail, the throwaway discursiveness, the gluttonously rich prose that readily spills over into food-based metaphors. Liebling himself was a short, stout trencherman who liked four-star cuisine and lots of it (he ate himself into a coffin at the age of fifty-nine), and he wrote about it with respectful glee. The closest he ever came to outright autobiography was a memoir *manqué* called *Between Meals: An Appetite for Paris* (1962), the first chapter of which is called "A Good Appetite" and is reprinted in *Just Enough Liebling*.


A.J. Liebling

North Point Press

Along with food and crooked politicians, he wrote about boxing, small-time show business, and his fellow journalists. He is best remembered today for his long run as the *New Yorker*'s press critic, in which capacity he penned the oft-misquoted line "Freedom of the press is guaranteed only to those who own one," though his uneven "Wayward Press" columns are now praised to excess by modern-day journalists who dote on his knee-jerk liberalism. (A lifelong man of the left, Liebling secretly worked as a legman for Alger Hiss's defense team while simultaneously criticizing press coverage of the Hiss trial in the *New Yorker*, an offense he would have lampooned mercilessly had he caught a right-wing journalist doing the same thing for Whittaker Chambers.)

Liebling's wartime writing was far more impressive—so much so, in fact, that one might say World War II was the making of him. Before the war he had specialized in memorable tales of low life in Manhattan, including "The Jollity Building," a three-part study of the Brill Building, a Broadway landmark that long served as headquarters for the lower depths of the pop-music business. Then Ross sent him to France in 1939 to substitute for Janet Flanner, the magazine's much-admired Paris-based correspondent, who had come back to America to tend her sick mother. When the war started in September, Flanner was unable to return to Paris, and Liebling found himself transformed willy-nilly into a war correspondent.

He approached his new task in much the same way he had written about New York, looking for the little-picture stories he loved best, but with one crucial difference. He now started putting himself into the picture: "If there is any way you can get colder than you do when you sleep in a bedding roll on the ground in a tent in southern Tunisia two hours before dawn, I don't know about it. The particular tent I remember was at an airfield in a Tunisian valley. The surface of the terrain was mostly limestone. If you put all the blankets on top of you and just slept on the canvas cover of the roll, you ached all over, and if you divided the blankets and put some of them under you, you froze on top."

That's how Liebling led off "The Foamy Fields," a 1943 dispatch about the Allied desert campaign. Rarely had he injected himself into his early articles, personal though their tone was. (Nowhere in "The Jollity Building," written in 1938, does Liebling refer to himself as "I.") Now he became a character in his reports from the front, the hapless, bemused

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narrator who described his unlikely-sounding wartime adventures as though he were strolling down Broadway, recounting them without the slightest trace of the strutting self-aggrandizement that afflicted so many other correspondents who wrote in the first person.

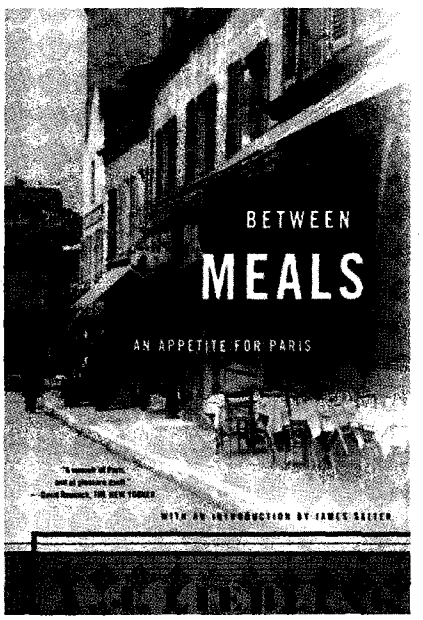
When it came to conveying the sheer everydayness of war—as well as the occasional moments of terror—Liebling was Ernie Pyle's only peer. Several of his wartime pieces were included in *Reporting World War II*, the Library of America's invaluable two-volume anthology, and they leave no doubt that of all the specifically literary American journalism to come out of World War II, A.J. Liebling's was by a long shot the very best.

For the rest of his life Liebling would continue to write in the conversational style he perfected in his wartime dispatches, though his prose became more ornate and frankly reminiscent as he grew older. Even when he slipped out of sight for a moment or two, as in this passage from *Between Meals*, you always knew where he was:

> *Mens sana in corpore sano* is a contradiction in terms, the fantasy of a Mr. Have-your-cake-and-eat-it. No sane man can afford to dispense with debilitating pleasures; no ascetic can be considered reliably sane. Hitler was the archetype of the abstemious man. When the other krauts saw him drink water in the Beer Hall they should have known he was not to be trusted.

The postwar Liebling was to wield considerable influence on the "new journalists" of the 1960s, who used his self-reflexive techniques in a flashier, more overtly virtuosic way (in the process occasionally losing sight of their subject matter, a sin he almost never committed). Meanwhile, their mentor disappeared from view. Years of compulsive overeating and a pair of unhappy marriages had taken their toll on an already depressive temperament, and by the time of his death in 1963, Liebling had all but dried up. Most of his best work had been spun into a dozen books, but none of them sold well or stayed in print.

Not until 1980, when Raymond Sokolov published a biography, *Wayward Reporter*, and edited *Liebling Abroad*, an omnibus volume of four of his best collections, did his work become readily available outside of well-stocked libraries and start to win him acclaim. Since then he has been hailed as a key figure in American literary journalism, the missing link between Mencken and Tom Wolfe, and paperback editions of most of his pieces have come and—alas—mostly gone. What was needed all along was a wide-ranging, smartly edited collection that made a large chunk of Liebling's best work available in one place.



I wish I could say that North Point Press's *Just Enough Liebling* is it, but it isn't. Though the *New Yorker*'s David Remnick has written an engaging introduction, this five-hundred-page anthology has no editor credited, and I suspect that anonymity disguises the input of meddlers insufficiently familiar with Liebling's output. The section devoted to his wartime journalism, for example, leaves out "Cross-Channel Trip," his deservedly legendary D-Day report (though it finds room for a pair of untypically flat "letters from Paris"), while the low-life chapter contains only "The Jollity Building" and an overripe seventy-page excerpt from his weakest book, *The Honest Rainmaker*, an endless profile of Colonel John R. Stingo, a racetrack tout for whose wheezy monologues Liebling had an inexplicable fondness. What's more, the editor or editors of *Just Enough Liebling* have neglected to indicate which of his books served as the sources for their selections, an inexcusable oversight.

Fortunately, North Point has also brought out attractive paperbacks of *Between Meals* and the collection of boxing essays Liebling published in 1956, *The Sweet Science*. Presumably additional volumes are in the works—starting, I hope, with *The Earl of Louisiana*. In the meantime, "Cross-Channel Trip" is available in *Reporting World War II*, while Broadway Books recently reissued *The Telephone Booth Indian* (1942), which contains most of Liebling's best-remembered low-life pieces. Interested readers, then, would probably do better to pass up *Just Enough Liebling* and go straight to the originals.

But will they? Liebling was, after all, a short hitter, and though *Between Meals* and *The Earl of Louisiana* are good, the rest of his vast output is best savored one piece at a time, not least because it is so rich a dish. It's no accident that most of Mencken's admirers have come to him not through his own books but by way of the many Mencken anthologies that have been published over the years, among them his *A Mencken Chrestomathy*, perhaps the finest self-anthology ever published. Had A.J. Liebling put together a similar volume with equal care, he might be better known today. I doubt that *Just Enough Liebling*, though it contains many good things, will prove an adequate substitute.

Is it too much to hope that the Library of America might be persuaded to give us a Liebling volume? Outside of Mencken himself, I can't think of another American journalist more deserving of such deluxe treatment—or one whose posthumous reputation would profit more from getting it. ♦

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"But will it play in Peoria?"

Books in Brief

***The Truth About the Drug Companies: How They Deceive Us and What To Do About It* by Marcia Angell (Random House, 305 pp., $24.95).** The promotional materials proclaim this a "deeply disturbing book." And it is. *The Truth About the Drug Companies* is a hatefest. Angell, former editor of the *New England Journal of Medicine*, thinks the pharmaceutical industry is nothing but profiteering corporations that spend money marketing me-too products instead of trying to make medical breakthroughs.

About the facts, Angell is often wrong. She claims, for instance, that prescription drug costs are the "fastest growing part of the health care bill," though, in fact, hospitals are. Where she isn't wrong, she simply distorts or ignores contrary facts. She claims it costs $100 million to develop a new drug, an estimate she got from a Nader group—and she rejects the estimate of $802 million published in the leading peer-reviewed economic journal, because "economic and finance theories are not required to accord with most people's experience, as they would be in the natural sciences."

The Truth About the Drug Companies also claims there is no real evidence that any one drug is better than another or that most medicines really do much at all. And Angell goes as far as to say: "the idea that patients respond differently to me-too drugs is merely an untested and self-serving hypothesis." Rather, she says, "one or two drugs will do" for most medical conditions. Thereby, she ignores recent work by economist Frank Lichtenberg who found that for each additional dollar spent on newer medicines, total health care spending is reduced by $6.17.

Finally, Angell asserts that every breakthrough drug started without drug company involvement. She claims that Gleevec, the first cancer drug to target cancerous cells without side effects, was developed without any real input from Novartis, the company that makes the product. Angell says that Brian Druker, a cancer researcher at Oregon Health and Science University, said that Novartis showed little interest in the cancer compound until he discovered its tremendous properties. The real story—from the *Journal of the National Cancer Institute*—reflects the risky and collaborative nature of drug development, which requires massive capital and biopharmaceutical know-how to turn discoveries into effective treatments. An academic researcher and private company, working together, launched a revolution in the treatment of cancer. You wouldn't know it by reading Angell.

Angell wants government to control all drug research and drug prices. She wants the government to prohibit any new drug from coming to market unless it can be shown to be better than the ones already there. If you read her book, you can't help thinking that if drug companies disappear we won't miss them. But *The Truth About the Drug Companies* is not truth at all. It reminds me of what Mark Twain once wrote: "I am not one of those who in expressing opinions confine themselves to facts." Twain wrote fiction. Then again, so has the former editor of the *New England Journal of Medicine*.

—Robert Goldberg

***Those Who Forget the Past: The Question of Anti-Semitism* by Ron Rosenbaum (Random House, 649 pp., $16.95).** Ron Rosenbaum sees the world after the attacks of September 11 experiencing a new kind of hatred. It originates on the left, centers around the destruction of Israel, and dominates popular belief in the Arab world. And so he assembled an anthology of essays by the likes of Gabriel Schoenfeld, Lawrence Summers, David Brooks, and Philip Roth.

A parade of pessimism issues from these authors. Still, many American conservatives—both Jews and non-Jews—are praised in these pages for their efforts to counter anti-Semitism. And the sheer existence of Rosenbaum's book provides a necessary reminder that a major obstacle in America's war on terror is the new and virulent anti-Semitism.

—Sabrina L. Schaeffer

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This month, Riviera Concepts, Inc., a fragrance distributor based in Toronto, began rolling out Hummer Fragrance for Men, a cologne inspired by General Motors Corp.'s hulking sport-utility vehicle. . . . [I]t melds the 'essence of the outdoors'—green leaves, thyme and peppercorns—with the smell of leather, sandalwood, patchouli and tonka beans (a type of aromatic seed), according to the company.

—The Wall Street Journal, *9/30/04*

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The War Angle:
Wake up, Falluja—we're back. And what's that scent? Savor a voluptuous burst of amber and leather as your extremists get flushed, felled by bunker busters and overtones of sandalwood. Greetings, Abu Musab. That exhilarating whiff is patchouli, and the only kidnapping going on today is of green leaves, held briefly for ransom by the delicate sharpness of fresh thyme. Enjoy the sensation of our righteous firepower mingling in graceful counterpoint with the tonka bean. HUMMER: The smell of secularism.

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What Elections Mean for Afghanistan

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Paid for by the Hoover Institution, Stanford University.

Afghanistan is holding its first ever presidential elections on October 9. This landmark event comes almost exactly three years after the United States and its allies launched a war to dislodge the Taliban and destroy al Qaeda. But **is this the birth of real democracy or a show election to satisfy the conscience and political needs of Western governments?**

By most measures, Afghanistan seems far from ripe for democracy. As President Karzai struggles to build a government in Kabul, much of the country remains under the control of warlord armies. More than 20,000 U.S.-led military forces continue to battle insurgents, and another 8,000 international soldiers are maintaining peace in the capital. Factional fighting has touched every corner of the country, and more soldiers and aid workers have been killed this year than in the previous two. The opium trade, which provides substantial resources to terrorists, was worth $2.3 billion last year and will increase an estimated 50 to 100 percent this year.

It will be difficult to ensure free and fair elections in this environment. More than ten million Afghans have registered to vote, many at great personal risk. This is a promising sign that Afghans want a say in their future. But the United Nations, which is helping organize the elections, recently released a report warning that many Afghans would be unable to freely exercise their political rights owing to warlord intimidation. The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe has refused to send election monitors, citing a lack of security. And on his first major campaign trip outside Kabul, President Karzai was nearly assassinated. Concerns about fairness are muted, however, because the outcome of the elections seems assured. There are eighteen candidates for the top spot, but there is little doubt that U.S.-backed President Karzai will win.

There is some value to holding elections, even if they will not be completely free and fair. If this election is successful, Karzai will win a clear victory, giving him a patina of legitimacy. This election will also serve as an important political and logistical test in preparation for parliamentary and local elections next spring. Those elections, which will be much more hotly contested, have the potential for far greater upheaval. However, many believe, rightly or wrongly, that the presidential elections have been rushed not to hasten democracy in Afghanistan but to precede the presidential elections in the United States.

Elections themselves are only a small part of democracy. Effective government service, protection of individual rights, accountability—these are the true fruits of democracy. Holding elections without the rule of law can undermine democracy by sparking violence, sowing cynicism, and allowing undemocratic forces to become entrenched. Slow progress on disarming militias and creating a national army and police force has left the central government with little power to enforce laws. The court system, controlled by fundamentalist Islamists in Kabul, is barely functioning in the provinces and cannot be relied on to enforce the most basic laws—let alone adjudicate politically sensitive issues such as electoral disputes.

Instead of focusing on elections—the end product of a successful democracy—we must do more to strengthen the institutions that will truly make elections meaningful. We have inspired millions of Afghans with the promise of democracy; we must now commit to turning that rhetoric into reality.

—J Alexander Thier

J Alexander Thier, a national fellow at the Hoover Institution and a fellow at the Center on Democracy, Development, and the Rule of Law at Stanford University, was a legal adviser to Afghanistan's Constitutional and Judicial Reform Commissions..

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